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## **Social resilience of post-earthquake Bam**

Meskinazarian, Ahoura

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# **SOCIAL RESILIENCE OF POST-EARTHQUAKE BAM**

**AHOURA MESKINAZARIAN**

BSc, MSc

**OCTOBER 2011**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of London**

**Department of Geography**

**King's College London**

# Declaration

---

I declare that this thesis

## **Social Resilience in Post-earthquake Bam**

Has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. This thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated, is fully cited and referenced, and/or with appropriate acknowledgement given.

Signature of the student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: Ahoura Meskinazarian

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Name of secondary supervisor: Dr. Daanish Mustafa

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# Abstract

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This thesis investigates the root causes of the social vulnerability of Bam and examines the role played by the evolution of institutions in the post-earthquake reconstruction period in shaping resilience. Through studying the reconstruction process of Bam for six years (from 2004 to 2010) the research explains the dynamics of institutional interactions of different agents and organizations involved in the reconstruction. A synthesis of literature on vulnerability and resilience enables the thesis to position post-disaster reconstruction as an opportunity to alter those institutional factors that had generated vulnerability, and to move the trajectory of institutional evolution towards a more resilient society. In particular the thesis focuses on the role played by the formation and character of social capital and its transformation or stability from pre- to post-disaster contexts.

The Bam earthquake occurred at an important political juncture in Iranian history allowing this kind of analysis on institutional structures which have since retreated. Following the earthquake of 2003 in Bam the central government of Iran immediately created a group of professionals and administrative officials to design the relief and reconstruction programme. One of the main stated objectives of the designed plan was to involve people in the reconstruction process. In practice, however, people became marginalized from key decision-making fora. The absence of local people's voices in the design of the reconstruction plan increased the vulnerability of some groups like renters and widows. Further, the approach negatively affected the Bamis' sense of belonging exacerbated through different factors like influx of workers from all over the country to do labour work, or the damage to palm trees (a cultural touchstone in Bam and economically important resource) during the reconstruction process. In the absence of local NGOs in the aftermath of the earthquake, national and international NGOs filled the gap between the local people and the central decision makers. Despite the lack of experience and small budgets of the Iranian NGOs and time limitation of international NGOs, NGOs were successful in elaborating local participation and social capital. Spaces were

created for different socially vulnerable groups especially women to play more prominent roles in social activities. According to one of the women of Bam:

"Women of Bam are much more empowered now. There are more women who work outside their home. There are more women in Bam driving cars. Women of Bam are more social these days"(2010).

Evidence in this thesis highlights the importance of local participation and the role of NGOs in creating vertical links between local people and central and non-central decision-makers in order to increase social resilience through post-earthquake reconstruction.

***Dedication:***

***To the beloved Bam, the place of warmth, patience, serenity  
and generosity***

# Acknowledgements

---

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this thesis possible. First and foremost I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my first supervisor Prof. Mark Pelling for his insightful supervision, invaluable guidance and unfailing support. I also would like to thank Dr Daanish Mustafa who has shared valuable insights in the relevance of the study.

I also would like to make a special reference to Dr. Sharif Motawaf, Dr Alireza Fallahi, Dr. Siamak Zand-razavi, Dr. Homayoun Sadeghi, and Mrs. Roya Ekhlaspour. Without their corporation I could not have gotten such relevant data. I am also grateful to Mr. Mansourish the runner of Ehya NGO, Mrs. Ahmadzadeh and Mrs. Gerami runners of House of Mother and Child NGO, who have made available their support in a number of ways.

I also wanted to thank my parents, sister and brother for their endless support, love, prayers, numerous blessings and well wishes and for easing my way through the journey. I also thank my parents-in-law and brother-in-law who inspired, encouraged and fully supported me for every trial that came across my studies.

Words fail me to express my love and deep appreciation to my husband for his dedication, understanding and persistence confidence in me; without his support and encouragement I would not have been able to complete this thesis; and to my daughter for being a source of energy and joy. Having her by my side, while trying to complete this thesis on schedule, has made this journey a truly memorable and rewarding experience.

I owe my deepest gratitude to the people of Bam from whom I have learnt so much. I whole heartedly thank them for their kindness and patience during my field work in Bam.



Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project, including my colleagues and friends at Kings College London for sharing literature and invaluable assistance.

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# Abbreviations

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**BBC:** British Broadcasting Corporation

**DRR:** Disaster Risk Reduction

**GNP:** Gross National Product

**GRO:** Grassroots Organisations

**HF:** Housing Foundation

**HFA:** Hyogo Framework for Action

**IBC:** International Blue Crescent

**IDNDR:** International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

**IIEES:** International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology

**IRAC:** Iraqi Refugee Council

**ISDR:** International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

**LDC:** Least Developed Countries

**MDGs:** Millenium development Goals

**NDH:** Natural Disaster Headquarter

**NGDO:** Non-Governmental, Development Organisations

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation

**OCHA:** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**ODA:** Overseas Development Assistane

**ODI:** Overseas Development Institute

**PAR:** Pressure and Release model

**PRA:** Participatory Rural Appraisal

**Rial:** the official currency of Iran (IRR)

**SWO:** Social Welfare Organisation

**UN:** United Nation

**UN-Habitat:** The United Nations Human Settlements Programme

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme

**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**UNICEF:** United Nations Children's Fund

**UNISDR:** United Nation International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

**UNOCHA:** United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian affairs

**WHO:** World Health Organisation

# Chapter 1

---

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This research elaborates on the concept of social resilience. More people are being made vulnerable to the risk of disaster as a result of rapid urbanisation and a lack of capacity of urban authorities or the private sector to supply adequate housing or basic infrastructure. Reducing Disaster Risk a Challenge for Development (2004), reports that the average population size of the world's one hundred largest cities increased from 2.1 million in 1950 to 5.1 million in 1990. However, as the report continues, the majority of urban populations live in small and medium towns. Urban growth *per se* does not explain vulnerability to disasters, but in many rapidly growing cities, some kinds of disasters like earthquake risk considerations have not been factored into the building and planning process.

There is a correlation between natural disasters and the human development index. Disaster is a much more serious issue for developing rather than developed countries. The studies of Alexander (1997) indicate that though the cost of disasters

are higher in developed countries compared to developing countries, the relative proportion of GNP absorbed in developing countries is higher and so are the death tolls. According to Ariabandu (2003, p15), nearly ninety percent of natural disasters and ninety five percent of disaster-related deaths worldwide occur in developing countries. This research estimates that by the year 2025, eighty percent of the world's population will live in developing countries, and up to sixty percent will be highly vulnerable to floods, severe storms and earthquakes (Ariabandu, 2003, p15). This trend emphasises the importance of studying disaster from a social point of view.

The UNDP's Global Report: Reducing Disaster Risk A Challenge for Development (2004) has indicated that between 1980 and 2000 around seventy five percent of the world's population live in areas affected at least once by earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods or drought. Eleven percent of the people exposed to natural hazards live in countries classified as low human development, yet they account for more than fifty three percent of total recorded deaths:

Disasters wipe out decades of progress and development in just a few seconds. Their impact, both in terms of deaths and economic losses, is increasing dramatically. In 2008, the death toll from natural disasters tripled to 235,000 from an annual average of 66,000 over the period 2000-2007. Economic losses totaled \$181 billion, more than double the annual average of \$82 billion over the same period (Source: Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2009).

Such findings raised international concerns for improving disaster resilience for nations and communities. Three of the most prominent international efforts in this regard are the creation of the United Nation's (UN) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) in 1999; The Millennium Development Goals (2000); and The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (2005).

On 11 December 1987, the General Assembly of the UN designated the 1990's as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). UNISDR was created in 1999 as a successor body to carry on IDNDR's work. UNISDR's core areas of work concerns Disaster Risk Reduction.

In 2000, at the Millennium Summit, 189 UN member states and major international agencies agreed on eight international development goals called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by the year 2015. Targets 8A and 8B of the MDGs concern poverty reduction through good governance especially in Least Developed Countries:

- Target 8A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
  - Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally
- Target 8B: Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDC)
  - Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) for countries committed to poverty reduction

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities was an outcome of the 2005 conference held in Kobe, Japan. 168 Governments adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA); a ten year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards. The HFA suggests five specific priorities for action:

1. Making disaster risk reduction a priority;
2. Improving risk information and early warning;
3. Building a culture of safety and resilience;
4. Reducing the risks in key sectors;
5. Strengthening preparedness for response.



The aim is for the HFA to contribute towards the achievement of the MDGs through integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning. It is apparent that further outcomes and efforts are needed if the MDGs are to be realised and DRR factors addressed:

Greater urgency is now required to address the factors that are driving the increase in disaster risk, such as rural poverty and vulnerability, unplanned and poorly managed urban growth and declining ecosystems. Urgent action is necessary not only to reduce disaster risk, but also to maintain momentum in Millennium Development Goal achievement, including poverty reduction, adaptation to climate change and better health outcomes (Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, June 2009).

Social resilience is increasingly becoming the focus of development studies and poverty reduction efforts. Chambers (1995) notes that participatory projects and programmes often fail to identify and involve the poorest of the poor and other marginalised social groups in participatory processes. Thus one of the key questions is how to ensure that the poorest and marginalised participate in development processes and have access to development benefits.

Since the mid-1990s, international aid agencies including the UN and World Bank have been advocating a move towards tackling poverty. In this regard, a number of researchers and development agencies have initiated a livelihood approach as a way of improving understanding of the situations faced by the poor. This approach is now being used as a basis for designing, implementing and evaluating policy. Various decentralised and participatory programmes and projects have been supported to achieve this goal.

Due to inequitable access to resources, poor people in developing countries are far more vulnerable to negative environmental changes than their wealthier counterparts, since they lack the means to cope and recover from the impact of such changes (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), 2002, p12).

Participation in decision-making has been realised as the cornerstone to empowering target communities. Post-disaster reconstruction can be seen as an opportunity to address the social vulnerability of the affected community and use inclusive participation as a tool for empowerment. It is believed that disasters have the potential to create a moment of dislocation in the powers of the *status quo* (Pelling, 2003). Reconstruction in Bam, Iran is a case in point and can be used to analyse this concept.

Iran is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world (UNDP, 2004). The National Report of Iran (presented in Hyogo at 2005) indicates that 17.6 per cent of 153 destructive earthquakes occurred in Iran during the last century. Thirty five percent of Asian earthquakes in the twentieth century took place in Iran (ibid). In the first four months of 2002, more than 100 earthquakes were registered by the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES). More than 180,000 people have been killed as a result of earthquakes in Iran during the last ninety years (National Report on Disaster Reduction, 2005). Four of the most disastrous earthquakes in Iran occurred in the last four decades: Boeen Zahra in 1961 with 10,000 dead; Tabas in 1978 with 19,600; Manjil in 1990 with 35,000; and recently Bam with more than 30,000 fatalities (Khatam, 2006). These figures highlight how serious threat earthquakes are to countries, namely Iran in this case.

Due to the vulnerabilities of Iranian cities to earthquakes and the high level of exposure to this hazard, the possibility of recurrence in the future is high. This means that the country will also be prone to more reconstruction efforts. As mentioned earlier, reconstruction brings about the opportunity to apply empowerment policies. This highlights the importance of reconstruction studies to the country.

On 26 December 2003 at 05:27am (local time), the region of Bam in southeast Iran was struck by an earthquake registering 6.3 on the Richter scale which killed 31,828 people. It was one of the most disastrous earthquakes in Iran. The high death toll was due to susceptible buildings, and the time of the earthquake which was in the early

morning of the weekend and most people were asleep at that time (05:27am on Friday).

This research aims to establish the social resilience of the Bami people after the earthquake by studying the implementation of a participatory approach and how successful it was at addressing the vulnerability of urban residents from Bam.

According to Cleaver (2001, p36):

There is little evidence of the long-term effectiveness of participation in materially improving the conditions of the most vulnerable people or as strategy for social change.

This research attempts to fill the gap by furthering the participatory approach debate. The structure of the thesis will be as outlined below.

## **1.2 Thesis Structure**

Chapter two focuses on the research methodology, in particular, the epistemological and ontological approaches of this research; methods of data collection; sampling; questionnaire design; and research strategy.

Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework. There are six sections: The first two sections review the literature on the relationship between disaster and development and disaster and urbanisation. The third section, divided into seven sub-sections, explores the concept of vulnerability through different approaches. The concepts of social resilience and a sense of belonging are also discussed in this section. Section four provides a framework of the relevant literature examining the notion of social capital. The ideas on this issue from prominent scholars are discussed. Section five explores the role of civil society and non-governmental-organisations (NGOs) in reducing social vulnerability. In this section, the weaknesses of state-centred development projects will be highlighted and an

examination of how these projects can improve through implementing participatory approaches by means of social capital will be presented. The final section considers existing literature on post-disaster reconstruction, in particular, highlighting the importance of reconstruction in shaping the social resilience of the affected community and reshaping local power structures.

Chapter four gives an introduction to the institutional context of disaster management and reconstruction in Iran. In particular the state structure in Iran after the revolution, urban governance, the situation of NGOs, the system of disaster management in Iran, and experiences of post-war and post-earthquake reconstructions.

Chapter five contextualises Bam before and after the earthquake with a historical introduction before moving on to: The sources of livelihoods which shaped the structure of power, examining landownership and entitlement, the effects of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, citizenship and entitlement, pre-earthquake Bam, the earthquake, and the designed structure of reconstruction management and governance.

The thesis then follows three empirical chapters. Chapter six studies the resilience of residents of six of the most affected districts of Bam. This chapter is the outcome of field work and a questionnaire survey which took place in 2008. It explores the changes these districts experienced since the earthquake, notably in relation to family bonding ties, dependency rates, age and gender distribution in the districts, access to shelter and financial resources, neighbouring trust, trust towards new residents of Bam, social networking, and peoples' perceptions of governance and empowerment.

Chapter seven is titled "Bam Participatory Housing Reconstruction Approach and Outcomes". Through six sections, this chapter examines how reconstruction policy which was designed in Tehran by Tehrani professionals and how government members were successful in addressing the social vulnerability of Bami people through its participatory housing project. Furthermore it discusses how the housing project affected the residents' sense of belonging.

Chapter eight, the third empirical chapter, explores the roles and effectiveness of national and international NGOs on increasing the social resilience of Bam. It analyses how NGOs (with a focus on Iranian NGOs) at the later phases of reconstruction tried to connect to the local community, their main subject areas and communities, and how they affected the structure of power. The activities of foreign NGOs and international agencies and their relationship with Iranian NGOs are also considered.

Chapter nine concludes the thesis. It presents a summary of key research findings. Some recommendations are suggested regarding more effective participatory approaches in development projects to increase the social resilience of communities. The chapter ends by summarising study limitations and future research areas requiring exploration.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of the research. It discussed how recent disasters have made international organisations put important steps in place regarding increasing the social resilience of vulnerable communities, especially in less developed countries. It was argued that post-earthquake Bam can be helpful in enriching the debate on social resilience: through studying how in a country highly exposed to earthquake risk and with many experiences of reconstruction how the post-earthquake reconstruction phase of Bam was used by different stake-holders to address the urban and social vulnerabilities of the area.

## Chapter 2

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# Methodology of the Research

### 2.1 Introduction

Disasters provide opportunities for change and empowerment for affected communities, but the people directly involved are often left out of the reconstruction planning process. This thesis addresses the effect of reconstruction policies and opportunity it provided on the social resilience of Bam. According to Flybjerg:

"There does not and probably cannot exist predictive theory in social science. Social science has not succeeded in producing general, context-independent theory and, thus, has in the final instance nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge" (Flybjerg, 2006, p224).

This chapter is structured into eleven main sections. After the introduction, the next section looks at the epistemological approach of the research, which will be followed by the presentation of the ontological approach. Section four delineates the justification of this study's qualitative and quantitative strategies. Section five will look at the research design of this study; it will discuss what this research is looking for and how it has aimed to address the identified issues. The next section explains the data collection methodology. Section eight examines the data analysis employed and the final section explores the ethical and moral issues that the author considered during the research. The chapter ends with some concluding facts.

## **2.2 Epistemology of the Research**

Justification of our choice of methodology and methods depends on our theoretical perspective and epistemology: What kind of knowledge do we believe will be attained by our research? What characteristics do we believe that knowledge to have? According to Maynard (1994, p10): "epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate".

In conducting social research there is a need to clarify how research methods and practice connect with the wider social scientific enterprise. Research is largely undertaken in order to answer questions posed by theoretical considerations. However, an alternative view posits theory as something that occurs after the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2004).

This research takes the epistemological perspective of hermeneutic-phenomenological interpretivism. Interpretivism critiques the application of the scientific model to the study of the social world. Unlike positivism, interpretivism looks for *culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of social life world* (Crotty, 1998, p67).

There is a fundamental difference between the subject matter of the natural sciences and the social sciences and that an epistemology is required that will reflect and capitalize upon that difference. The fundamental difference

resides in the fact that social reality has a meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful (Bryman, 2004, p14).

The forms of interpretivism are usually presented as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. This research applies the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach since it tries to probe the influence of cultural and institutional factors of agencies affected by the earthquake of Bam on the nature of their social interactions and perspectives. The difference between symbolic interactionism and phenomenology according to Crotty (1998) is:

Symbolic interactionism and phenomenology contrast with each other quite sharply in their attitudes towards culture as our inherited meaning system. Symbolic interactionism explores the understandings abroad in culture as the meaningful matrix that guides our lives. Phenomenology, however, treats culture with a good measure of caution and suspicion. Our culture may be enabling but paradoxically it is also crippling. While it offers us entrée to a comprehensive set of meanings, it shuts us off from an abundant font of untapped significance. (Crotty, 1998, p71)

Box 2.1: phenomenology: a philosophy that is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them and how in particular the philosopher should bracket out the preconceptions in his or her grasp of that world.

Hermeneutic: a term that is drawn from theology and that when imported into the social sciences is concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action

Symbolic interactionists: argue that interaction takes place in such a way that the individual is continually interpreting the symbolic meaning of his or her environment (which includes the actions of others) and acts on the basis of this imputed meaning. Bryman (2004) p14

Interpreting the actions and social world of the studied community from their point of view is a task hard to accomplish by social scientists. According to Bryman (2004), the social scientist has to place his or her interpretations into a social scientific frame. There is a double interpretation of others' interpretations. And then



there is a third level of interpretations because the researcher's interpretations have to be further interpreted in terms of the concepts, theories and literature of a discipline.

This thesis' findings are the author's interpretation of the interviewees' interpretations. The author then placed her findings into a social scientific frame, by relating them to existing concepts and discussions in development studies like vulnerability, social capital, participatory approach debates and the role of NGOs as a possible factor for generating social capital.

According to May *et al* (2001), however hard the sociologists may try to stand aside from the objects of their study, they are part of the experience and cannot separate completely from the knowledge that they seek to comprehend. *"How do our individual biographies intertwine with the history we share with other human beings?"* (May *et al*, 2001, p7).

Being an Iranian-woman from Tehran, the researcher found strong connections with the agencies affected by Bam's earthquake. Despite the minor differences between the semi-urban culture of Bam and the urban culture of Tehran, the researcher shared similar religious and national values and norms with the researched community. This had both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage, from a social point of view, was that it facilitated the researcher to communicate with individuals and access their 'common-sense thinking'. A disadvantage was that the researcher shared similar cultural perspectives with the studied community and hence had some limitations in her perspective on identifying any social shortcomings and problems. A Japanese or South American researcher, applying the same methodology, may determine different findings about the subject.

"It is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon...in this view of things, subject and object emerge as partners in the generation of meaning". (Crotty, 1998, p9)

## 2.3 Ontology of the Research

This research adopts a constructionism ontology. Here it is assumed that there is no precise objective identifiable truth to be discovered. But we construct the meaning through our engagement with the realities in our world (Crotty, 1998). Becker believes that the constructionist position cannot be pushed to the extreme. As Bryman (2004, p19) cites Becker's idea:

"It is necessary to appreciate that culture has a reality that 'persists and antedates the participation of particular people' and shapes their perspectives, but it is not an inert objective reality that only possesses a sense of constraint: it acts as a point of reference but is always in the process of being formed".

Becker (1982, as cited by Bryman 2004, p17) stresses the active role of individuals in the social construction of social reality. According to him since there is no set of cultural understandings that embody the solution of all problems, people create new solutions to their day to day problems and subsequently adapt to the new situation and hence new cultural settings are created.

## 2.4 Quantitative and Qualitative Strategies

This research benefited from both qualitative and quantitative research strategies. The differences between quantitative and qualitative research is often presented as: quantitative research embodies an objective view of social reality, incorporates the practices of natural scientific model and of positivism and entails a deductive approach in which the accent is on the testing of theories; while qualitative research, unlike positivism, sees social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation and emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories (Bryman, 2004).

However, according to Bryman (2004), despite the differences in terms of the role of theory, epistemological issues and ontological concerns, the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is not a "hard-and-fast" one. Studies that have

the characteristics of one research study may have a characteristic of the other and it is believed that the two can be combined within an overall research project.

By combining qualitative data with quantitative data the process of understanding the situation and the institutional framework that lies behind it can be facilitated. Qualitative methods, according to Snape and Spencer (2003), are useful tools for probing and understanding the nature and multiple dimensions of social phenomena and for identifying factors affecting these phenomena. According to Bell:

“Researchers adopting a qualitative perspective are more concerned to understand individuals’ perceptions of the world. They seek insight rather than statistical perceptions of the world. They doubt whether social ‘facts’ exist and question whether a ‘scientific’ approach can be used when dealing with human beings” (Bell, 2005, p7-8).

Qualitative methods can feed the explanatory nature of the research. They are more open to the respondents than a structured questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews, as a qualitative method, reflect the behaviour and attitude of the interviewee towards the subject, which can be difficult to realise through questionnaires. However, this characteristic of open interviews along with observation as the main tools of qualitative research, expose it to the criticism of subjectivity and questions the validity of findings (Ritchie, 2003).

Quantitative methods, on the other hand, can be used to modify the subjectivity of the findings and enrich the research. According to Burns and Grove (2001, p30)

“Quantitative research is a systematic process of obtaining formal objective data to describe the variables and their relationships. Quantitative research uses structured tools to generate numerical data and uses statistics to interpret, organize, and represent the collected data”.

However quantitative methods are less effective in understanding and explaining why people act and believe in a certain way instead of any other way. The incompetency is inevitable. According to Campbell:

"After all, man is, in his ordinary way, a very competent knower, and qualitative common-sense knowing is not replaced by quantitative knowing. . . This is not to say that such common sense naturalistic observation is objective, dependable, or unbiased. But it is all that we have. It is the only route to knowledge—noisy, fallible, and biased though it be" (Campbell, 1975, pp. 179, 191).

## **2.5 Research Design**

This research focuses on the social resilience of Bam in reconstruction. The aim of this research is to probe the social vulnerability of Bam and to determine the success of the institutional arrangements and solutions adopted to address the vulnerability and increase the resilience of the Bami people. This analysis relies on the existing and current literature on social resilience. The researcher tried to understand and explain the findings through the academic lenses of: disaster, vulnerability, resilience, social capital, NGOs, State-community synergy, reconstruction opportunity and civil society concepts.

The aim was to realise how existing norms guided the process of reconstruction, to what extent they were flexible and to determine how the obstacles (or opportunities) that appeared through the process may have transformed the existing norms. The hypothesis is that the institutions that emerge from the subjective process of post-disaster reconstruction can be regarded as an opportunity to alter those institutional factors that increase vulnerability and move the trajectory of institutional evolution towards a more resilient society by means of social capital.

The research tries to fulfil its aims through the following questions:

- What are main informal institutions that shaped social capital in Bam? How did informal institutions form the reconstruction? How did Bam's social capital direct the reconstruction process and change as a result of reconstruction? What are the most vulnerable groups and what causes their vulnerability?
- How did reconstruction influence informal institutions?

- ✓ How did reconstruction affect the social capital of Bam?
- ✓ What was the role of NGOs? How did NGOs transfer the notion of civil society, social determination and social inclusion in the reconstruction of Bam? What were their aims? What were their incentives? What was their recognition of empowerment? How did the reconstruction of Bam become an opportunity for Iranian NGOs' evolution?
- ✓ What was the role of the government's reconstruction plan and policy guidelines? How did they infer participatory reconstruction? How did they implement it? How successful were they in using the approach?
- How the findings from this research add to the debates on governance of reconstruction and social capital?

Seven years have passed since the earthquake. The emergency phase has ended and the focus of media on the city has decreased. It is a good time to evaluate the outcomes of the reconstruction project and find out any evidence and success of empowerment policies applied through the participatory reconstruction.

## **2.6 Collecting Data**

In order to find the answers to the above questions the research tried to determine indexes to measure and evaluate the key concepts such as vulnerability and social capital. The research endeavoured to establish the most prominent and powerful social institutions that were active in Bam before and after the earthquake to shape and/or address the vulnerability of Bami people.

It was realised that central government, as a social institution, had a great effect on the Bami's situation and perspective: having access to national resources and being legitimised through its link with religious beliefs of the community. The central government was seen as one of the most powerful stake-holders in conducting the reconstruction process and resilience of Bami people. It was understood through initial observation, conversations and interviews that, unlike the local government, there were great expectations from Bami people towards central government in

directing resources to the area in terms of improvement of livelihoods and infrastructure.

The government's perspective towards the reconstruction process and implementation of its projects were studied to probe the effectiveness of the government's policies in addressing the people's need. First the author met key informants, like lecturers in public policy, to determine the relevant representatives and branches of the central government concerned with reconstruction policies. In order to understand the government's centralised policy for reconstruction, some institutions including the Department of Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Ministry of Interior, the Department of Reconstruction in the Housing Foundation, the Department of Urban Planning in the Ministry of Urban Planning and Housing, and the Department of Disaster Reduction in the University of Shaheed Beheshti of Tehran were visited and the highest available chair of these organizations were interviewed. Moreover, some of the main architects involved in designing the Housing Reconstruction Policy of Bam were also interviewed.

To gain a better understanding of the subject, some of the other researchers who had studied the disaster discussed and shared their findings. In addition, documents related to Bam's reconstruction were either collected from professional libraries like the library of the Ministry of Urban Planning and Housing, University of Shaheed Beheshti, Housing Foundation, National Statistics Center, and the University of Social Welfare or were borrowed from professional agencies that were encountered and/or interviewed. The national parliament's website along with formal national newspapers' websites were also among the contributors to this research.

The researcher visited Bam during the different phases of reconstruction to study the implementation process of the centralised design projects. The author's first visit to Bam took place on summer 2005 and lasted for one month. On spring 2008, for the purpose of the research, a visit was made to Bam that lasted for about two months: the questionnaire survey and some of the interviews with officials and NGO staffs took place at this period. To enrich the data a two week visit occurred to Bam on October 2008. Two more visits were made on summer and autumn 2009 to study the

progress of reconstruction projects and NGOs' functions. To fulfil the research, in winter 2010 an in-depth interview survey took place with thirty seven Bami people to get a better understanding of the changes in the sense of belongings of Bami people seven years after the earthquake. Interviewees were selected randomly through the encounter of the researcher with local people. They were met by chance in the streets or public social spaces like the bazaar or through the use of public transport.

To see the reconstruction from the eyes of Housing Foundation executives different methods were used. The head of the Reconstruction Bureau of the Housing Foundation as the chief executer of the central government's reconstruction policies was interviewed, along with other senior staff members; the Housing Foundation's reports of reconstruction were studied; and the previous and current heads of the City Council of Bam were also interviewed.

Contacts were made with social activists and NGO workers in Bam who were in contact with the most vulnerable affected populations. Civil society shared their ideas about the housing reconstruction policy and acted as the gatekeeper to connect the researcher to the most vulnerable households. Finally, a few contractors responsible for implementing the reconstruction in Bam were interviewed.

Available secondary data were collated to enrich the research. The local newspapers were also studied to understand the Bami's interpretation of the reconstruction policies. The local bulletin *Shahrvandān-va-mosharekat* reflected the local problems expressed by local people through many interviews. For six months (from January 2004 to July 2004) the bulletin publicised people's problems. The author used data to get a better understanding about the level of sense of belonging and security of the residents at the early stages of reconstruction through the following indexes: the most troubling problems mentioned by the residents; the feeling of alienation of residents with their social surroundings through their view about change of social values; the influx of new comers to their area; and the new threats residents identified.

The author considered that NGOs were another prominent, active and powerful institution in the reconstruction of Bam. This interpretation came from both the outstanding debates of the role of NGOs in development projects, which demonstrated that NGOs are important in fostering civil society, and the novelty of NGOs operational in Bam on a large scale after the earthquake.

Through different stages of reconstruction, a number of visits were made by the author to Bam to study the activities of NGOs. Two NGOs, which were both historically and currently active NGOs in Bam: House of Mother and Child; and Ehya were studied. These two NGOs were also considered the best sources for creating links to the most vulnerable groups to capture their life histories. The communities that each NGO covered were studied. To do so the following practices were applied<sup>1</sup>:

- The life histories of twenty five households were documented. These twenty five households were the total number of households that resided in the House of Mother and Child's (HMC) housing project for the most vulnerable.
- Seven households not residing in the housing project but supported by HMC were visited and their life histories and situation documented.
- The researcher resided for a month with the NGO Ehya to observe, visit, and communicate with the Bami households supported by their work.

Other NGOs were chosen based on snowball sampling. Through interviews with the management and staff of different NGOs the author was introduced to new NGOs and their activities. Available documents about the active NGOs in Bam were also studied. These documents were either introduced by the interviewees or found in professional libraries and bookstores in Bam, Tehran and Kerman.

The considerable number of foreign NGOs that entered Bam after the earthquake made it hard for the researcher to ignore their influence on governance of post-earthquake Bam. However, the government of Iran gave foreign NGOs limited time

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<sup>1</sup> Life histories of the members of these NGOs are presented in chapter eight. These life histories are different from the thirty seven cases that are documented in chapter seven.



to be active in Bam. Most of them left Bam by the end of the emergency phase, i.e. three months after the earthquake. Some stayed longer for a maximum of two years. Hence by the time of the research most of the foreign NGOs had left the field. To study their activity the researcher approached the Iranians who worked for those foreign NGOs during their activities in Bam. In some cases where there was need to contact an informant that was not in Iran, the contact was made through email. Foreign NGOs were mostly involved in physical infrastructure or service delivery projects. Because of the time limitations they had, they preferred either not to get involved in social empowering projects or did it through a local national NGO. To choose which foreign NGO to study with relevance to the research a visit was made to the department of management of NGOs in the local government of Bam. A list of all foreign NGOs active in Bam was collected and those few agencies with social empowering projects were studied. UNICEF and UN-Habitat were also among the foreign organisations that were studied and had long-term influences in Bam and are still active in that field. To study their activities, visits were made to their branches in Tehran. Data were collected through interviews and studying published documents.

A survey using questionnaires was conducted across 196 Bami households to study the role of social capital in directing the reconstruction of Bam. The questionnaire was designed to measure the social capital of Bam as close to reality as possible. In designing the questionnaire, the author drew upon existing literature on measuring social capital; namely the World Bank-published book "Measuring Social Capital" by Narayan, Grootaert, Nyhan Jones and Woolcock (2004). Based on their experiences studying social capital, the authors of the book designed a structure for questionnaires regarding measuring social capital. According to the book:

"Though a survey tool is designed to generate quantitative data, we are conscious that a rich tradition of social capital research has drawn on qualitative methods" (p2).

There is a debate that operationalising social capital in research is difficult in anything other than a qualitative way, and indicators always seem partial and deficient (Bebbington, 2008). Moreover, according to Krishna (2001) measures of

social capital which are relevant for one set of cultures can be irrelevant for others. However, quantitative analysis would help to enrich research along with qualitative analysis to determine the extent of social capital in neighbourhood networks, civil networks, trust, bonding ties, and bridging ties especially in the large scale of a city like Bam with approximately one hundred thousand residents. Therefore quantitative analysis was also utilised. Furthermore the questionnaires became a means for the researcher to encounter the residents and observe the interviewee's situation, view points and informal responses. Through questionnaires general information about residents' socio-economic situation was gathered. This data informed a status report of the sample areas. The intention was that each questionnaire lasted no longer than fifteen minutes.

Whilst conducting the survey, some questions seemed inappropriate or did not suit the context of Bam. Consequently, some changes were made to the design of the questionnaire, which further enriched the research and put the interviewees at ease. For example, one of the first questions of the questionnaire was asking about the number of members of the household who were killed or injured by the earthquake. This question made initial respondents uncomfortable. The author hence decided to move the question to near the end of the questionnaire when interviewees were more at ease with being questioned.

Life histories of fourteen households from the questionnaire survey were document which seemed useful to the research. Moreover eight life histories from people who were encountered in daily routine activities (like the driver of the taxi that the author traveled with or some passer-by who were randomly chosen by the author to interview) also enriched the research. These interviews mostly took place in 2008. The stories of these people are presented mostly in Boxes in chapters seven and eight. These are different from the research of thirty seven cases (chapter seven) that were interviewed in 2010.

The life histories collected in 2008 were helpful in designing the theme of the later interviews in 2010. Through the former interviews a better knowledge about Bami people and their viewpoint towards their surrounding was achieved. It was realized

that palm groves were important factors in shaping the sense of belonging of Bami people and could be considered as important social capital. It also was realized that reconstruction of houses was the most important means to link people to the officials and executives of reconstruction. Reconstruction of houses was the most important factor in affecting the trust of people towards officials and increasing (or decreasing) their hope for future. In this regard the main themes of the semi-structured interviews of thirty seven households in 2010 were the effect of reconstruction on the palm groves and the viewpoints towards the effectiveness of the process of the reconstruction of houses.

The unit of the research at this level is household. The household, as Pelling asserts (2003) is the most fundamental institution and basic unit of social organisation. A household in this research is defined as ‘a person or co-resident group of people who contribute to and/or benefit from a joint economy in either cash or domestic labour and share a shelter’, or more simply, a group of people who live and eat together.

## **2.7 Research Methods**

This research benefited from a variety of research methods and techniques. They include interviews composed of semi-structured interviews, life histories and structured interviews (questionnaire survey); case studies; observation; and document analysis.

### **2.7.1 Interview Techniques**

#### **2.7.1.1 Face-to-face and semi-structured**

The interviews composed of introduction questions, follow-up questions, direct and indirect questions and in places where greater specificity was required probing questions. Semi-structured interviews took place with heads of NGOs and their staff; central and local government; the Housing Foundation's administrative officials; designers of the reconstruction plan; and researchers who had studied Bam. Through semi-structured interviews with the researchers and NGOs the interviewees were

asked questions such as how and why did they become involved in the reconstruction of Bam? How did they gradually communicate with and adapt into the field? What links were created through their work? What was their interpretation about the situation of Bami people after the earthquake? What were the main factors of vulnerability and how did they try to address them? To what extent were their presumptions close to the reality? What have they learned?

The questions asked to the governmental and Housing Foundation's officials and designers of the reconstruction plan included what were their sources in designing the reconstruction plan? What were their priorities and why? How did they conduct the reconstruction? What were their challenges? Through what links did they connect to Bami people and how did they hear the Bami people's voices? What were the shortcomings according to them? If the same incident occurred again what would they change about their efforts?

### **2.7.1.2 Questionnaire Technique**

The aim of the questionnaire is to explore the socio-economic characteristics of the sample community and the governance structure of reconstruction. Moreover, it is expected that questionnaires would shed light on how the governance structure and social capital affected the social and institutional structure of the community.

- ***Questionnaire Design:***

Questionnaires are designed from a base of general questions followed by more specific questions. In this way the respondent should better understand the purpose and the aim of the research. The questions are mostly closed form to allow the respondent to give a clear definitive response. Moreover, as Bell states “the more structured a question, the easier it will be to analyse” (Bell, 2005, p137). Other advantages of closed questions are that they are easy to process, time-efficient and increase the validity of the information (since it reduces the variability in recording the answers) (Bryman, 2004, p148). At the same time, the benefit of open-ended questions is taken into account in terms of capturing information not expected by the

researcher. Therefore an open-ended question was often included at the end of some questions to elicit more qualitative data.

For the purpose of this research the questionnaire was designed in four parts: (A) livelihood access characteristics of the household (Q 1-16, App 1); (B) social capital in forms of: membership in groups (Q 17, App 1), social networks (Q 18-23, App 1), trust and integrity (Q 24-26, App 1), cooperation and group activity (Q 27-30, App 1), social interactions (Q 31 & 32, App 1), and sense of empowerment (Q 33 & 34, App 1). Part A was designed to collect general information about the interviewee and about the social structure and livelihood resources of the household. Part B aimed to figure out the social trust among neighbours and citizens and organisations, addressed the kind and intensity of social capital in community through networking, social gathering and bonding ties, and tried to measure empowerment through neighbours' cooperation and grievance processes.

▪ ***Sampling:***

A total of 196 households were interviewed in six districts. Compared to Bam's<sup>2</sup> population of about one hundred thousand, 196 households cannot be regarded as a reliable representative sample of the city. It can be better considered as a rapid urban appraisal of the most affected regions of Bam. A rapid urban appraisal is more flexible, feasible and faster than a comprehensive citywide survey, considering the time and resource dedicated to this research. Through the appraisal the researcher learned directly from the local inhabitants (all questionnaires were completed by the researcher herself), which helped the thesis to reflect the voices of local residents and get closer to the local 'common sense'.

Districts were chosen according to the following criteria: they must be located in one of the two areas most affected by the earthquake: the northeast of the city (citadel and surrounding districts), and the southeast. Bam is considered as a garden city i.e. Palm groves (*Nakhlestan*) and dense urban areas exist together.

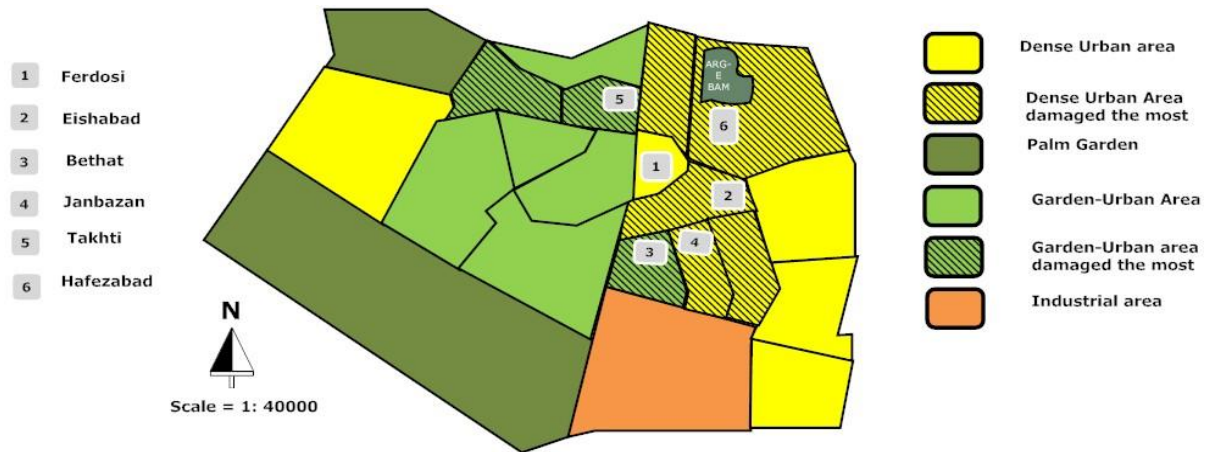
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<sup>2</sup> The city of Bam, not the region of Bam

Notwithstanding that the two areas both have been severely damaged, they were formed in different ways. The northeast area was shaped through the historical process of city expansion across the city walls, close to the old bazaar and the citadel, and includes the most affluent areas like Ferdosi district. The southeast region, on the other hand, was formed later in the city's periphery partly to accommodate the temporary workers districts like Eishabad and Fakhrabad are situated in this area.

Three districts in each area were chosen to give a broader view of the affected people and to document the experiences households from different classes had undergone after the earthquake. In selecting the study areas, the author endeavoured to survey a cross-section of the most affluent, the most deprived, and middle class districts. Here it should be noted that in contrast to service or industrial based cities, Bam traditionally being an agricultural city does not benefit from clear distinction of areas in regard to division of class. The most common response when asking where the most affluent and most deprived districts of Bam were was "Bam does not have an uptown and downtown *per se*". One local Bami suggested that "since Khans [i.e. the traditional landlords] and servants lived in the same neighborhoods and the city's economy has not yet expanded in service and industry that much, the uptown-downtown style has not been shaped in Bam."

The six districts selected for the research are: Ferdosi (as the most affluent district), Hafezabad (as the most marginalized being the center of drug dealer, often called as Black area), and Takhti (one of the most earthquake damaged areas) in the northeast; and Janbazan, Bethat, and Eishabad (in the southeast) (Figure 2.1). The figure is an amalgamation of the Housing Ministry's Map of Districts of Bam and *Ikonos* map of the most damaged dense urban and garden-urban areas of Bam.

**Figure 2.1: Allocating sample wards on Map of Bam**

### 2.7.1.3 Life History

Life history interview is described as documenting the "inner experience of individuals, how they interpret, understand, and define the world around them" (Faraday and Plummer, 1979, p776). The aim through recording life histories was to answer the following questions: what was the struggle that each household experienced during the emergency and reconstruction process? What kind of coping strategies did they use? What were the most important and troubling problems according to the households? What were their survival sources? What have they learned? To record the questionnaires the researcher actively tried to be a good listener and gave the interviewees times and confidence to share their experiences as much as possible. Life histories were beneficial in covering the issues that may not have been addressed through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Moreover it gave the interviewees the opportunity to share their interpretation of reconstruction in a better way than through questionnaires or semi-structured interviews.

Along with the life histories collected from vulnerable groups approached through NGOs, a minimum of fourteen households was selected from interviewees of the questionnaire survey. The most vulnerable households or households that seem to have benefited disproportionately from the housing reconstruction policies were chosen. This stage gave a more in-depth understanding of the experience of reconstruction for social vulnerable groups since the disaster. The aim is to understand the experiences these groups had in the subsequent years of reconstruction.

### **2.7.2 Case Study**

Using the case study of Bam to explore reconstruction allows greater depth in analysis and understanding of the ongoing process. According to Bryman (2004) case studies help to identify “the various interactive processes at work, to show how they affect the implementation of systems and influence the way an organization functions” (2004, p10). Yin defines case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Yin 1994: 13). Eisenhardt (1989) believes case study represents a strategy which focuses on the dynamics present within particular situations, using discourse material (such as questionnaire, interview and focus groups) as one element of its data. Thus it can be helpful for the investigation of complex social contexts. The case studies in general combine data from a number of parallel sources: archives, interviews, questionnaires etc. (Eisenhardt, 1989). In this regard, both qualitative and quantitative methods are needed to extract data from the field.

Between April 2007 and October 2010 five visits to Bam took place. Bam is situated in a desert area and consequently has very hot weather at the end of spring and during summer. As a result, residents prefer to go to cooler areas and government staffs usually work part-time. In this regard, conducting the research in summer would reduce access to important interviewees, and affect the richness of the research. Therefore Trips to Bam occurred mostly in spring, fall and winter.



### **2.7.3 Document Analysis**

By studying the news about the Bam earthquake through content analysis the following considerations were applied: attempts were made to access the published data about Bam as much as possible; the most prominent national, international and local resources including ten national newspapers, some international websites including BBC, ReliefWeb, ODI, UNICEF, and UN-Habitat and two local newspapers were studied and all the news related to reconstruction and socio-economic issues of Bam since the earthquake were collected. Informal and unreliable resources were disregarded.

### **2.7.4 Observation Technique**

This research benefited from unstructured observation technique. The aim was to record the ongoing process in as much detail as possible. While in the initial visits to Bam the observation was general with the aim of gaining a general view about the process, in later visits the observations became more purposeful and targeted such as studying the evolution of specific NGOs, the quality of life of specific households or the relationships of neighbours.

### **2.7.5 Tools for Collecting Data**

Various tools for data collection were employed. Interviews were digitally recorded or/and transcribed with the consent of the interviewees. Observations were noted down in four diaries. On occasions where additional information was needed and further questions arose during the data analysis, telephone calls were made with the interviewees to complete the information. Internet was also helpful in accessing both formal and informal information and email to make contact with key informants.

## 2.8 Analysing Data

Different indicators were used through questionnaires to measure social capital.

For measuring the strength of bonding ties the following indicators were used:

- the household size,<sup>3</sup>
- the number of households living with their extended family (under one roof or in adjacent buildings),
- the number of times per month relatives would meet each other,
- and how had these factors have changed since the earthquake.

To measure the level of affluence of households the following indicators were used:

- the number of members of the households who had jobs,
- the access of the households to a private car,
- whether they are supported by the government's social policies in terms of benefiting governmental remittance or not,
- the number of people per room (i.e. how many rooms were shared among how many members of the households)
- and the dependency rate (i.e. the number of members who earn money to the number of members who consume money in the household).
- The number of completed houses was another factor that was studied to find out the speed of housing reconstruction in different areas and relate this rate of reconstruction to other factors including age and the affluence of the households.

To measure the level of trust, networking and norms of reciprocity of households they were asked the following questions:

- did they know their neighbours?

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<sup>3</sup> Household composition is both a determinant of the capabilities, choices and strategies available to a household, and may be an outcome of strategic decisions about fertility or where members of the family reside (Rakodi, 2002).

- To what extent did they trust their neighbours?
- Would they leave their children with them?
- Have they done anything with their neighbours in benefit of the district since the earthquake?

To study their coping strategies households were asked:

- in time of financial difficulty from whom would they borrow money?
- Have they sent any grievance letters to the government or any other informal organisations?
- How powerful do they think they are in governing their city?

To analyse the questionnaires' data, an indicator for each question was defined and a frequency table was used to determine the number and percentage belonging to each category. Diagrams were used to present the results and facilitate understanding and interpretation of the data.

Coding was used based on the theme of the answers to analyse the semi-structured interviews. The researcher examined the answers to semi-structured questions in interviews and grouped them into different categories. In coding the data, efforts were made to avoid any overlap of the categories and to ensure all the factors revealed in the responses from the interviewees were categorised.

## **2.9 Ethical and Moral Issues**

The role of researcher in social science and especially field work is a highly sensitive position in conducting the process. Social research, in contrast with scientific research, does not deal with objects. Its targets are humans. Humans shape their attitude and behaviour depending on their perception of each other. A social researcher is not excluded from this fact and his/her presence will influence respondents' attitudes towards the research. During the research the fact that the researcher was a woman facilitated the process of research in many occasions. Bamis are religious Muslims and many of the women in Bam, especially in more deprived areas, remain indoor and not comfortable communicating with unknown men. Being

a woman, the author had the advantage of gaining the trust of Bami women to communicate with them openly. Especially in life history cases Bami women shared their stories with comfort. Not to trigger their sense of alienation and to respect the culture of Bam, the author adopted a culturally sensitive dress similar to Bami culture and avoided western style or Teherani style clothing.

During interviews the researcher applied a passive position. It should be mentioned that at the early stages of the research it was harder for the author to control her emotions, but gradually the researcher became more self-aware and experienced to play a solid listener role.

Another issue that this research will pay attention to is the protection of respondents' information in terms of confidentiality. In this regard, the identities of respondents are concealed and are only used by the author for the selection of key informants in the later stages of the study. In terms of government staff, the intention was to state only their positions instead of their names.

All interviews occurred with informed consent of the interviewees. At the beginning of each interview the researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of the study. Interviewees were free to participate in sharing data.

The researcher was loyal to the research and views are presented as they were revealed. Considerable effort was made to transfer the meaning of the questions to the respondents in order to ensure that all the questions were understood and had consistent meanings to all respondents. In translating the information from Persian to English the translations were done by the author and endeavoured to reflect the original meaning as far as possible.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the epistemological and ontological approaches that this research applies. It justified the combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies to enrich this research. The aims and structure of the research were discussed. The logic of the research design was explained and the methods and techniques for data

collection were presented. The chapter also explored the data analysis techniques and process and how the ethical and moral issues confronted by the researcher were addressed.

## Chapter 3

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# Literature Review: Addressing Vulnerability through Social Capital in Post-disaster Reconstruction

### 3.1 Introduction

Understanding the notion of vulnerability is vital in disaster risk reduction discourse. Disasters, as Quarantelli (1986) believes, are the manifestations of the vulnerabilities of a social system, where doing something about such vulnerabilities, should be given attention. Social vulnerability is the main aspect of vulnerability that this research examines. Social aspects of vulnerability are those social factors that shape the susceptibility of various groups to harm and that govern their ability to respond (Cutter, 2003).

This literature review begins with defining the notion of disaster and its relationship to development. The concept of vulnerability will be explored through prominent approaches found in the social science literature. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section discusses the importance of disaster discourse in the development literature. The second section will discuss the relationship between urbanisation and disaster. The third section analyses the concept of social vulnerability in relation to disaster and development. This section is divided into seven sub-sections: Studying vulnerability through a livelihood or entitlement approach; vulnerability and poverty; the Pressure and Release model; vulnerability and resilience; an Institutional approach to Vulnerability; vulnerability and participatory approaches; and vulnerability coupled with a sense of belonging.

The chapter then sketches out a conceptual framework for understanding the notion of social capital. It will be argued that different forms of social capital, namely cognitive and structural forms, are useful in reducing social vulnerabilities. This research studies the notion of social capital through the following titles: Origin of social capital; Putnam's social capital; the dark side of social capital; and the contribution of social capital to development studies.

This research further explores the dynamics between the national state, NGOs and local communities. This section discusses the role of state and civil society in governance with a focus on the debates of Habermas about the relationship between the state and civil society. It further presents some of the examples of state-centred development projects. The section additionally highlights some of the problems associated with centralised development programmes and presents possible solutions, for example, by developing transformative participation with NGOs, and by giving attention to cognitive social capital. Post-disaster reconstruction is one of the principal opportunities for states, local communities and NGOs to practice participatory approaches and thereby create opportunities for social capital.

## 3.2 Development and Disaster

Natural disasters are defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources (UNISDR Terminology, 2007). Studies on natural disasters have revealed a correlation with the development level of the affected community (Alexander 1993, Pelling 2003, Blaikie *et al* 2003). With the creation in 2005 of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) the focus on disaster risk reduction has increased, and its link to social resilience has been highlighted. On page 23 of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, the strategic goals are presented as:

1. The integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning.
2. The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards.
3. The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes.

Evidence from recent disasters has proved that natural disasters can hinder the development process. Hurricane Mitch in 1998 is eminent in this regard for affecting Nicaragua and Honduras so severely that, according to Carlos Flores, (then President of Honduras), "we lost in 72 hours what we have taken more than 50 years to build bit by bit" (Cannon, 2008, p301). Disaster, as a manifestation of development failure,



reduces the well-being and quality of life for the people in the affected area. For this reason, post-disaster recovery is seen by some scholars as an opportunity to apply development factors in the affected community:

It is important to realize that the post-disaster 'recovery process' is one in which an underdeveloped system is forced to achieve a re-adaptation to an environment using limited resources, a process not unlike the processes by which development or underdevelopment are produced to begin with...in other words we must recognize that 'recovery' especially in an underdeveloped society, is a 'development process' in and of itself. It amounts to the establishment of a set of patterns which reassert the adjustment of a human population to an environment. After all, development itself amounts to a process by which a population improves its level of adaptation an environment and through such improvements raises the level at which it satisfies human needs and wants, and at the same time lowers its level of vulnerability to disruption. For these reasons, the recovery process can be one which either increases or decreases the level of development of a community. (Bates and Peacock, 1989, p362-363)

Disaster discourses have helped the development discourse to incorporate social and political views because disasters are deeply embedded within social vulnerability. Cannon (2008) believes disasters cannot be separated from problems encountered in daily life. Anderson and Woodrow (1989 as cited by Moser 1998) argue that development should be regarded as a process through which people's physical, social and attitudinal vulnerabilities are reduced.

### **3.3 Urbanisation and Disaster**

Urbanisation has close links with economic growth since goods and services are often produced most efficiently in densely populated areas that provide (1) access to a collection of skilled labour, (2) a network of complementary firms that act as

suppliers, and (3) a significant number of customers (Rakodi, 2002). This fact (often contributed by the neglect of rural areas by policymakers) attracts people from rural areas and small towns to bigger cities lured by the attraction of job opportunities.

Dense patterns of urban living are one of the key reasons that contribute to risk generation. Cities constitute only 1 percent of the land area of the earth, but they accommodate more than half of the world's population and the majority of its physical capital (building, infrastructure) (Pelling, 2003, p22). Hewitt (1997) realises four factors that increase urban vulnerability to hazard in terms of its high density: First, due to the increasing scale and dense pattern of urban areas, energy routes are concentrated close to residential areas; second, the high density of cities facilitates disease transmission, which along with congestion, constrains disaster relief; third, the complexity of the cities and links between different elements and activities expose people to the domino factor – damage on one sector easily affects another sector; fourth, urban populations can become targets of political conflict and be mistreated (as cited by Pelling, 2003).

The rapid population growth of cities because of in-migration has decreased the ability of planners and decision makers to control the city. Studies conducted by the United Nations suggest that 80 percent of population growth in the next few decades will occur in urban areas. According to the UNDP's global report (2004): *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development*, when populations expand faster than the capacity of urban authorities or the private sector to supply housing or basic infrastructure, the risk in informal settlements increases.

This rapid growth and inability of authorities to control the process has resulted in the mushrooming of urban populations living in the peripheries, and of squatter settlements which are mostly inhabited by the urban poor who live in sub-standard, small dwellings and prone to landslides and floods (Aysan, 1992). These groups are often marginalised and excluded from formal housing, credit and loan facilities reducing options for households to improve their physical vulnerability and reduce

their exposure to hazard (Pelling, 2003). In times of natural hazard, they are often the most affected people who have the least coping strategies.

There is also the risk of vulnerability for transient or migrant populations. For these people, social and economic networks in cities tend to be loose. Their marginalisation leads to a lack of access to resources and increased vulnerability. These people are often forced to make difficult decisions about risk. Living in hazardous locations is sometimes 'chosen' if it provides access to work, for example, in the city centre (UNDP's global report: Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development, 2004).

Cities are expanding not only in size but also in number; cities which until recently were sparsely populated, are now home to hundreds of thousands of inhabitants (Aysan, 1992). Rapid housing construction in response to this increasing demand has resulted in sub-standard construction.

### **3.4 Introducing Social Vulnerability to Disaster Discourse**

Whilst physical phenomena are necessary for the production of natural hazard, their translation into risk and potential for disaster is contingent upon human exposure and a lack of capacity to cope with the negative impacts that exposure might bring to individuals or human systems (Pelling, 2003, p4).

The literature on disaster is linked to the concepts of vulnerability, resilience and coping capacity. According to Bankoff (2004), vulnerability is the key concept in understanding disaster. There are different stances on the definition of vulnerability in social science. Understanding vulnerability helps to better define the problem and find sustainable and effective solutions to urban disaster risk and integrate better reconstruction and development.

In the 1990s, the focus of disaster studies was directed to social vulnerability. As Lewis argues:

...instead of regarding disasters as purely physical occurrences requiring largely technological solutions, as was widespread until the 1970s, such events are better viewed primarily as the result of human actions, as the actualization of social vulnerability (1999, p8).

Hewitt (1983) and Quarantelli (1978) were among the premier scholars who challenged the dominant view to focus on technology and expert solutions to disaster. They stated that disasters were not physical happenings, but social events:

It is a misnomer to talk about natural disasters as if they could exist outside of the actions and decisions of human beings and societies. For instance, floods, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other so called natural disaster agents have social consequences only as a result of the pre-, trans-, and post-impact activities of individuals and communities (Quarantelli, 1992, p3).

Hewitt (1983) directed attention towards viewing disasters as social and anthropogenic and not only as 'accidental' and 'natural' occurrences:

In hazards work one can see how language is used to maintain a sense of discontinuity and otherness, which severs these problems from the rest of man-environment relations and social life. That is most obvious in the recurrent use of words stressing the "un"-ness of the problem. Disasters are *unmanaged* phenomena. They are the unexpected, the unprecedented. They derive from natural processes or events that are highly uncertain. Unawareness and unreadiness are said to typify the condition of their human victims. Even the common use of the word (disaster) "event" can reinforce the idea of a discrete unit in time and space (Hewitt 1983, p10).

### 3.4.1 Entitlement/Livelihood Approach

Sen's argument, in his 1981 seminal work 'Poverty and Famine', about the importance of individual entitlements to resources in shaping vulnerability towards famine enriched the development and disaster debate. In his book, he argues that famine is not always a consequence of the shortage of food, but can be the result of the lack of command of specific people over food. He believes famine is not always about the problem of there *being* enough food in a community, but it more about people *having* enough food. Entitlement (as the legal and customary rights to exercise command over food and other necessities of life) was presented as the main cause of famine.

The studies of entitlement have close connections with the notion of power. To Sen (1981), a person's ability to command any commodity he wishes depends on what he owns, what exchange possibilities are offered to him, what is given to him for free, what is taken away from him, and in sum, on the entitlement relations that govern possession and use in that community. According to Sen (1984):

Entitlements are the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces (Sen, 1984, p497).

The entitlement approach has been incorporated into thinking about vulnerability in relation to hazards more generally. In development studies, this can also be seen occurring through the livelihood approach. According to Chambers and Conway (1992), a livelihood is defined as comprising, 'the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for means of living' (DFID, 1992, p1). Applying this thinking to urban disaster impact, loss of household assets due to shocks or any other reason reduces the entitlements of households and exposes them to threatening situations (Pelling 2003, Carney 1998), as Carney recognises:

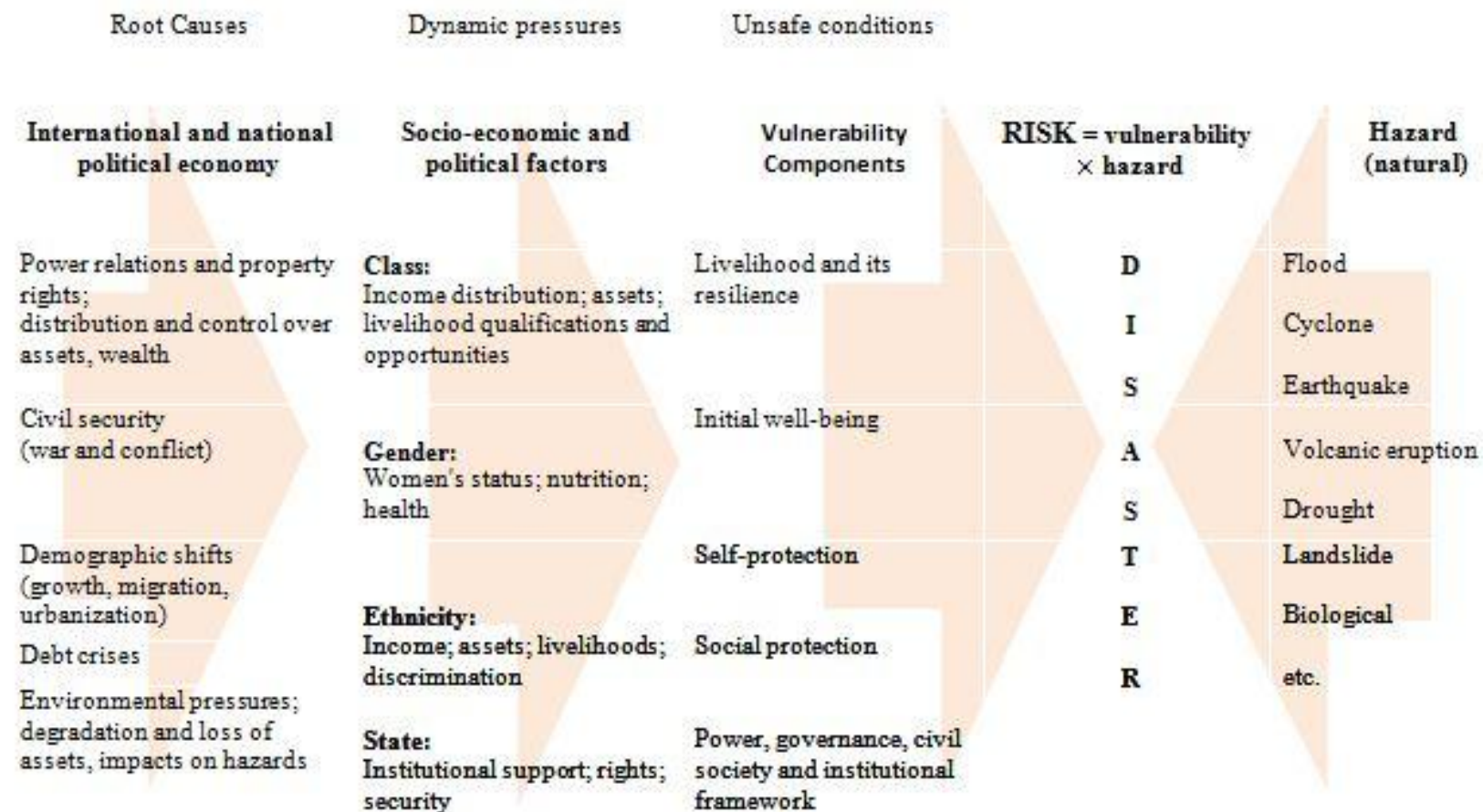
A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future (Carney, 1998, p4).

### **3.4.2 Vulnerability and Poverty**

It can be argued that the loss of productive assets, if not addressed properly, exposes households to long-term poverty:

Household or individuals are considered poor when the resources they command are insufficient to enable them to consume sufficient goods and services to achieve a reasonable minimum level of welfare... Deprivation occurs when people are unable to reach a certain level of functioning or capability (Rakodi, 2002, p4).

Chambers (1989) adds physical weakness, isolation and powerlessness as factors exposing people to poverty. Poverty can also be defined, not only by lack of assets and inability to accumulate a variety of them, but also by “lack of choice with respect to alternative coping strategies” (Rakodi, 2002, p6). As Rakodi (2002) argues, households can have access to a portfolio of both tangible (cash, food and land) and intangible (claims on others and the government, and access to rights’ services) assets. They decide on how to use this portfolio. The strategy that households apply depends both on the portfolio held and on the household’s capability to use livelihood opportunities. The most vulnerable households have to adopt strategies that enable them to survive but strategies which will not help to improve their welfare (Rakodi, 2002).

Figure 3.1: Pressure and Release Model (Source: Blaikie *et al.*, 1994)

### 3.4.3 Pressure and Release (PAR) model of Vulnerability

Blaikie *et al* (1994) in their seminal work: "At Risk: natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disaster" (1994), synthesized Hewitt's and Sen's approaches in dealing with disasters. They argue that disasters are natural hazards transformed into disasters due to the level of vulnerability of the affected community. People's vulnerability is generated by social, economic, and political processes that influence how hazards affect people in different ways. In contrast to Hewitt (1983), who was not very precise in defining the concepts of disaster and tended to use the concepts of hazard, disaster and catastrophe interchangeably, Blaikie *et al* (1994) created explicit definitions for the main concepts of disaster studies to such a degree that "At Risk" has become one of the key sources for defining disaster concepts (see Box 3.1).

**Box 3. 1. Disaster:** A disaster consists of three interrelated factors; hazard (H), vulnerability (V), and risk (R). These three factors relate to each other via the equation  $R = H + V$ , which is the definition of a disaster.

**Hazard:** A hazard is the physical agent in a disaster. A hazard can be forecasted via probability studies. However, the statistical likelihood of a given hazard to occur says very little of the actual level of risk a given society or segment of a population is subjected to (Blaikie *et al* 1994, p21)

**Risk:** The risk concept is somewhat more problematic as it is hard to separate it analytically from the concept of disaster as "risk is a compound function of this complex (but knowable) natural hazard and the number of people characterised by their varying degrees of vulnerability who occupies the space and time of exposure to extreme events" (Blaikie *et al* 1994, p21).

**Vulnerability:** The characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist or recover from the impact of hazard" (Blaikie *et al* 1994, p11).



Blaikie *et al* (1994) presented a comprehensive hazard and vulnerability model called the Pressure and Release (PAR) model (Figure 3.1). Despite the fact that vulnerability factors are numerous, complex and very context-based, a diagrammatic summary presentation can be helpful. PAR is an acceptable and simplified manifestation of the relation between vulnerability and disaster. The PAR model identifies a chain of factors that affect vulnerability as root causes (like power structure, debt crisis and civil security) and dynamic pressures (like women's status, rights, and livelihoods) which lead to unsafe conditions (like fragile self-protection and social protection). In the PAR model, the risk of being harmed by a hazard (like earthquakes, floods, and drought) is represented by the pressure of the hazard on one side against the vulnerability conditions on the other:

The basis for the Pressure and Release model (PAR) idea is that a disaster is the intersection of two opposing forces: those processes generating vulnerability on one side, and physical exposure to a hazard on the other. The image resembles a nutcracker, with increasing pressure on people arising from either side - from the vulnerability and from the impact (and severity) of the hazard on those people at different degrees of vulnerability. The "release" idea is incorporated to conceptualise the reduction of disaster: to relieve the pressure, vulnerability has to be reduced (Blaikie *et al.* 1994, p22).

### 3.4.4 Vulnerability and Resilience

Analyzing vulnerability involves identifying not only the threat but also the 'resilience', or responsiveness in exploiting opportunities, and in resisting or recovering from the negative effects of a changing environment (Moser 1998, p3).

In vulnerability studies, the concept of resilience has gained wide currency. Holling *et al* (1995) define resilience as "the buffer capacity or the ability of a system to absorb perturbations, or the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before a

system changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behaviour (as cited by Adger, 2000, p349).

For Pelling (2003), resilience is one of the components of vulnerability. He divides vulnerability into three components: Exposure (as a product of physical location and character of the surrounding built and natural environment); resistance (as the capacity of an individual or group of people to withstand the impact of hazards in economic, psychological and physical health terms); and resilience (as the ability of an actor to cope with or adapt to hazard stress).

Davis (2006) also believes in the importance of paying attention to two forms of dealing with hazards namely: The ability to absorb the shocks of the hazard impact (what Pelling calls resistance) and the capacity to bounce back during and after disaster (what Pelling calls resilience). However, Davis entitles both forms as phases of resilience. He also adds another phase: "The opportunity for change and adaptation following a disaster (thus to reduce the time needed for recovery as well as patterns of vulnerability)" (Ian Davis, 2006, p12).

Pelling (2003) believes all three components are shaped by an actor's access to rights, resources and assets. In a way, Pelling meets Sen's argument about individual entitlements to resources and rights which shape (and is shaped by) the structure of power. For a community to absorb the shock and escape from deprivation depends on their initial assets and on their ability to transform those assets into income, food or other basic necessities (Moser, 1996).

### **3.4.5 Vulnerability through an Institutional approach**

An institutional approach can contribute to a better analysis of vulnerability, resilience and reconstruction. Institutions are an outcome of the interaction of social structures with agency. North defines institutions as:

The rules of the game of a society, or more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are composed of formal rules (status law, common law, and regulations), informal constraints (conventions, norms of behaviour and self imposed codes of conduct) and the enforcement characteristics of both (North, 1997, 23).

Institutions and the relationship between the formal rules and the norms of the society are key elements in explaining development and risk relations. They reflect and shape the power relations that define interaction among actors and represent the relationship between humans with their surrounding environment. Mushtaq Khan (1995) argues that it is political power that defines the ranking of institutions:

The performance ranking of institutions is specific to the inherited political power of classes or groups subject to the institution (Mushtaq Khan, 1995, p71).

Through institutional change, the vulnerability of people can either be exacerbated or reduced to enhance human security (Adger 1999, Pelling 2003). According to Adger (2000), the social resilience of a community depends on the institutions of that society; both modes of socialised behaviour, and formal structures of governance or law.

Pelling's idea (2003), is that to reduce vulnerabilities, and for the entitlements of the locally marginalised to be enhanced, attention needs to be paid to the formal and more importantly informal institutions that lead to such marginalisation within the local community.

People with lower access to resources, civil rights, supporting networks and health conditions suffer more from natural disasters due to their higher level of vulnerability. Societal institutions (including state, law, religion, kinship and family), norms and policies shape the power structures and distribution of resources in a

society. Thus, they play a crucial role in excluding individuals from full participation in the social and political life of the societies; hence social vulnerability, or what Adger (1999) calls "collective vulnerability":

Extensive research over the past thirty years has shown that in general, it is the weaker groups in society that suffer worst from disasters: the poor (especially), the very young and the very old, women, the disabled and those who are marginalized by race or caste. Those who are already at an economic or social disadvantage tend to be more likely to suffer during disasters (Twigg, 2004, p16).

### **3.4.6 Vulnerability and Participatory approaches**

The role of inclusive participation in opening space for actors to challenge existing structures of power through changing institutions has gained increasing attention in recent years.

Oliver-Smith (1996) states that disasters can accelerate changes that were underway before the disaster by manifesting the weaknesses in political-economic power structures which may then result in reinterpretation of development structure and processes. He believes that rapid local, state, national or international aid and the convergence of local and non-local people and goods that result from the disaster can be as great a source of change as the disaster itself.

Pelling (2003) also agrees that disasters and the phases that follow have the potential to create substantial socio-political changes. He believes that disasters can institute a new form of governance through informal responses that operate outside established social frameworks:

At the heart of the political actions [after disasters]... is a tension between formal responses to disaster that come from, and so potentially give political

power to, the state and its institutions on one hand, and on the other, informal responses that operate outside of established planning and social frameworks and potentially weaken the established socio-political order. Such responses may not have it as a goal to challenge the authority of the state or local social elite, but by operating outside of established norms they create an example of an alternative form of social organization that can stimulate subsequent critiques of the pre-disaster social system (Pelling, 2003, p42).

To Pelling (2003), the optimum institutional position is when grassroots and NGO participation facilitates engagement of urban citizens in the democratization process. Progressive civil society and local government can create opportunities for those previously excluded from full participation in society. They can play the role of advocate for the powerless as well as spreading information throughout the community. Through synergy between civil society and the state, resources can be distributed more equally and transparently among communities.

Reality however, does not conform to the theoretical optimism of change of governance in favour of democratization. A study by Christoplos et al (2001) on Post-Mitch Nicaragua shows that the centralised decision-making of the central government of devolving authority to municipal governments, and its strategy of retaining control over relief and rehabilitation resources, resulted in weakening of the incomplete process underway before the disaster.

Disasters provide a window of opportunity for advocacy, but experiences suggest that it is doubtful if this advocacy has had any impact on policies or their implementations (Christoplos et al, 2001, p250).

If we are going to accept the fact that disasters are outcomes of social vulnerabilities and such vulnerabilities continue to appear after the occurrence of a hazard, then the recovery and reconstruction phases following a disaster are great opportunities for addressing such vulnerabilities. For solving the vulnerability problem, it is crucial to

define the problem precisely and correctly. Through this approach, the development trajectory following disaster would take the community to a higher level of resilience than they were before the disaster. To try to keep the status *quo ante* would block the evolution of the affected community and show a lack of the third phase of Davis's resilience (i.e. the opportunity for change and adaptation following a disaster).

Though vulnerability factors are very context based and differ in communities, recent studies on disaster and development suggest that there is much to be gained from participatory approaches. Vulnerabilities are alleged to be outcomes of social marginalisation and exclusion (which are consequences of entitlement framework shaped through different facts: History, modern global pressures, religion, geographical boundaries, etc). In this regard, participation appears as a sound answer to enhance local resilience (especially when promoted in tandem with structural advances in governance for risk reduction).

Trends in reconstruction are greatly influenced by development trajectories prior to the disaster (Kates, Haas and Bowden 1977, Quarantelli 1982, Alexander 1997). The efforts made during the reconstruction period have a critical role in decreasing or exacerbating the vulnerability of the community. In other words, while the condition of a community affected by disaster is the product of the development process of the area before the disaster, the community that arises after the reconstruction is the consequence of reconstruction policies and the way they are implemented.

Kelman *et al* (2008) believe for community-based projects it is initially important to ask "who is the community?" They argue (2008) that communities are rarely homogeneous and there are always divisions by gender, age, experience, leadership capability, leadership style, culture and religion. Hence, the importance of indentifying how a community is defined by itself and by others (for example geographically or culturally); who purports to represent the community and how they achieved that position; and who is marginalised from a community. The answers

might assist in understanding the different views and characteristics of communities (Kelman *et al*, 2008).

According to Kelman *et al* (2008), to move towards achieving a just, inclusive participatory and community-based approach, it is also important to combine external and internal knowledge through some form of participatory action-oriented community risk assessment. In this way, some solutions will be provided externally, some locally, and many will be developed through collaboration. The result will encompass the risks which are identified by the local community and those where there is marginal awareness by people but no direct experience (Kelman *et al*, 2008).

### **3.4.7 Vulnerability and Sense of Belonging**

To study the effect of a disaster on a community, it is helpful to find out what the disaster has damaged and what this reveals about the pre-disaster society. Damage depends on the type of hazard, but for the sake of this research, earthquake is more relevant to the debate. When an earthquake strikes along with physical and human losses, it also leaves social and psychological damage. Through destruction of the built environment, the individual loses his or her connection with the surrounding environment which, before the earthquake, accommodated home, memories, social and private spaces. The places that an individual once communicated with and posited oneself in vanish in a moment. In an extreme case like Bam, with high death tolls, the very demography of the place changes as well. With loss of the familiar built environment and social networks, individuals face problems of interpretation and identity. The individual has to posit oneself in a new space and adapt perceptions, expectations, and resources in accordance with this new space. Based on the individual's ability, the person tries to remake the destroyed social as well as physical space. Capacity to adapt to new situations is one way of interpreting and indicating levels of individual and group resilience. To expand on this hypothesis, it is helpful to understand the theoretical debates around the subject of 'sense of belonging'.

Social structure existing in a community creates a safe culture that Shaw defines as:

...a set of norms, rules, beliefs, attitudes and social and technical practices...  
which are concerned with minimizing the exposure of individuals to  
conditions considered dangerous (2004, p23).

This research adopts this definition for a ‘sense of belonging’.

Community and place are factors that give individuals a sense of security, identity and belonging. Place (i.e. a space imbued with meaning) gives a person collective and individual identity (Simpson and Corbridge, 2006). In this way, location alone does not in itself make a community (Martin 2003). This is important for reconstruction where most emphasis is on the reconstruction of a physical space, not on the reconstruction of place. To many scholars, the important factor that contributes to the creation of group identity is the memory of a place that its inhabitants share (Alderman and Hoelscher 2004, Simpson and Corbridge 2006). The discourse of memory and place emphasises the importance of the built environment in the formation of memory and social identity. In this way, built environments are shaped by, and in turn, influence the society that produces them (Dwyer, 2000).

Here, the work of French historian Pierre Nora (1989) is of great significance. He quotes; “self-consciousness emerges under the sign of that which has already happened, as the fulfilment of something always already begun” (1989, p7). He relates memories to sites to explain how memories are spatially constituted. To him, sites of memory, or *lieux de memoire*, are the crystallisation of the physical environment that does not exist anymore. Sites can be demarcated through material (like churches, schools, and neighbourhoods) as well as non-material entities (like stories, song, celebration and rituals).



To stress the importance of collective memory and nostalgia in reconstruction, it is of use to note that such sharing of the past can ease stress and loss for community members. Knowing that there are other members who have experienced a situation can reduce the pain and strengthen social ties which are crucial for personal and collective processes of social reconstruction. Davis (1979) argues that nostalgia (defined as the positive evocation of the past against negative feelings towards present (Davis, 1979, p18)), can help to diffuse panic, uncritical reactivity, and uncertainty, as well as offering stability in times of conversion (i.e., reconstruction).

Due to the high death toll in Bam's incident, which killed more than one third of the population, the post-earthquake Bami social recovery can theoretically be resembled by displacement discourses after the disaster (i.e. accommodating residents of a disaster affected area into new places). Field studies have documented various manifestations of social disarticulation, such as growing alienation and anomie, the loosening of kinship bonds and increasing social inequality through displacements following a disaster. Some of these field studies are presented in the chapter titled: Some Examples of Reconstruction and are extracted through reviewing existing literature. This marginalisation and displacement results in a reduction in the quality of life for a group of society, whereby their situation deteriorates over the long term, making them even more vulnerable. The fragmentation of social support networks that exist in communities subject to displacement has far-reaching consequences. It:

...compounds individual losses with a loss of social capital: dismantled patterns of social organization, able to mobilize people for action of common interests and for meeting immediate family needs are difficult to rebuild (Cernea, 1995, p96).

In a study by Nayek in 1986 (as Cernea cited 1995) in the Rengali dam project in India, a sociological study found evidence of social problems. Marriages were deferred because dowries, feasts, and gifts became unaffordable. Re-settlers' obligations towards and relationships with non-displaced kinsmen were damaged

and interaction between individual families was reduced. As a result, participation in group action decreased and daily informal social interaction was severely shortened (Nayek, 1986 as cited by Cernea, 1995, p96).

If forced post-disaster out-migration occurs and decreases the resident population significantly, then the rate of return remains low for a few years and the social reconstruction of a city may become complicated – especially if migrants are replaced by in-migrants, potentially from damaged satellite urban and hinterland rural settlements. Demographic and associated social changes could cause infrastructures to malfunction as a result of not being used to capacity, for example; schools, public transportation, and hospitals (see examples in Chapter Four: The Post-war Reconstruction in Iran).

One factor playing a part in the deteriorating well-being of displaced communities is the loss of what Abramowitz (2005) calls the “social self”. Displacement following disasters damages social bonds and the sense of community. This accentuates the feeling of insecurity as community is an important source of support. According to Walzer:

The primary good that we distribute to one another is membership in some human community...Men and women without membership are stateless...statelessness is a condition of infinite danger (1992, p65-66).

Erikson calls this situation “collective trauma” and believes it is a gradual realisation that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared:

As people begin to emerge hesitantly from the protective shells into which they have withdrawn, they learn that things are isolated and alone wholly dependent upon their own individual resources (Erikson, 1978, p154).

Along with a sense of security, community gives our lives their moral meaning. Taylor, as cited by Avineri (1992), sees the community as a good because “only by virtue of our being members in communities we can find a deep meaning and substance to our moral beliefs” (1992, p2). A study by Abramowitz (2005) on Yende residents in Guinea following a civil attack and social deformation revealed that residents were unsatisfied with the present situation in terms of community value. One of the residents complained that “there is no respect in my community. No more value or morals exist in my community...nobody has time for anyone any longer, no regard and no respect... there are no good relationships between people” (2005, p2112).

This loss of the social self shows itself also in the studies of Cernea (1997). He believes the loss of a family’s home linked with the loss of a group’s cultural space results in alienation of the families subjected to forced displacement and a lasting experience of placelessness. This in turn fragments patterns of social fabric including reciprocal help and voluntary associations and transforms displacement zones to what Atteslander (1995) calls “anomic regions”.

### **3.5 Social Capital**

The concept of social capital makes a valuable contribution towards probing further into the subject of agency in this environment. This research presents the reasons how and why this concept became popular and how it continues to be so. Furthermore, this research studies the evolution of the concept through development studies.

#### **3.5.1 Origin of Social Capital**

In primary studies of social capital the studies of three social scientists are most prominent: Glen Loury (1977), Pierre Bourdieu (1985), and James Coleman (1988).

Loury's contribution to social capital was that social positions held by individuals can result in not being given equal opportunities. He presented his seminal work: *A Dynamic Theory of Racial Income Differences* in 1977 as a critique to racial income inequality in the United States. The social class origins of individuals denote the amount of resources that are ultimately invested in their development. Therefore, the opportunity to succeed does not merely depend on a person's capabilities. In this regard, he used the term "social capital" as "the consequences of social position in facilitating acquisition of the standard human capital characteristics" (Loury, 1977, p 176). In 1992, he states:

[Social capital refers to] occurring social relationships among persons which promote or assist the acquisition of skills... [It is] an asset which may be as significant as financial bequests in accounting for the maintenance of inequality in our society (Loury, 1992, p100 as Woolcock cited 1998).

Inferred from these quotes, Loury sees social capital as an outcome as well as a relationship between social actors and groups that significantly influences the structure of power and access to resources. He presents social capital as an asset possessed by an individual.

An alternative approach that has also used the term social capital was developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Portes (1998) believes Bourdieu's definition of social capital is the most theoretically refined among those introducing the term in contemporary sociology. Bourdieu uses social capital as a theory to describe stratification and production of social classes. Bourdieu present social capital as an asset that belongs to both the individual and the group:

[social capital is] the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1992, p 119).

This quotation reveals that, to Bourdieu, social capital is first of all the level of access individuals or groups have to resources; second, this access occurs through social networks (cited by Portes (1998), Bourdieu believes these social networks are not a natural given but are socially constructed); and third, these social relationships are shaped by institutions. These institutions are outcomes of cultural factors and in turn influence the culture. It is due to this notion that Woolcock presents Bourdieu's definition of social capital as "a cultural mechanism used to define and reinforce the boundaries of particular status groups" (Woolcock, 1998, p156).

The significance of Bourdieu's work is the notion that he clearly distinguishes between social relationships and the outcomes of those relationships. He distinguishes between networks and the outcome of social capital as access to resources; networks are tools to achieve social capital. Such clear division is not visible in works on social capital of his counterparts; especially in the works of Loury and Coleman.

Coleman is another theorist of social capital who, according to DeFilippis (2001), brought social capital into the mainstream American social sciences. Coleman used the term 'social capital' in 1988 as an important variable in the creation of human capital.

Social capital is defined by its functions. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they all facilitate certain actions of actors - whether persons or the corporate actors - within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive: making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence (Coleman 1988, S98).

Coleman's view of social capital includes any entity that facilitates action. It is neither an outcome nor a mechanism: It is a "thing", an "entity" but embodied in social interactions and intangible like trustworthiness, information and norms.

Coleman does not see social capital as an asset that can be possessed by an individual; to him, social capital is a public good:

...as an attribute of the social structure in which a person is embedded, social capital is not the private property of any of the persons who benefit from it... A property shared by most forms of social capital that differentiates it from other forms of capital is its public good aspect (Coleman, 1990, p315).

The difference between Coleman's perspective of social capital with Bourdieu's is that Bourdieu used the term as an explanation of stratification, and Coleman used it to describe a facilitator for social relations. While Bourdieu uses social capital as a tool to determine who has the agency and power of access to resources in society, in his view, any social relationship contains an unequal institutional arrangement. In terms of the possessions of social capital, Coleman gives neutral value to social capital and applies a descriptive approach to explain the way action is shaped by the social context.

Coleman (1988) identifies three forms of social capital: obligations and expectations (which depend on trustworthiness of the social environment), information-flow capability of the social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions. This is in accordance with Putnam's main sources of social capital as trust, networks and norms of reciprocity. Since ongoing debates of social capital are greatly raised and influenced by Putnam's work, it is necessary to discuss his view on social capital further.

### **3.5.2 Putnam's Social Capital**

While Loury, Bourdieu and Coleman are foundational contributors to the concept of social capital, ongoing debates on social capital have been reinvigorated by the seminal work of Putnam from 1993 onwards.

His view of social capital is that “social capital refers to the norms and networks of civil society that lubricate cooperative action among both citizens and their institutions” (Putnam, 1998). To Putnam, social capital describes the “features”, or the “characteristics”, in comparison with Coleman’s definition of social capital as an observable entity or Bourdieu’s as level of access to resources. But Putnam’s focus is not on the social capital itself, but on its outcome: On what it does.

The core of Putnam’s work on the concept of social capital, which is the main source of the attraction of his work especially for the World Bank, is participation. He refers to social capital as “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam, 1995, p664-665). As Mohan and Mohan (2002) rightly state, Putnam’s model suggests a sequence in which participation is associational activity producing greater levels of trust and civic engagement (Mohan and Mohan, 2002).

Putnam sees social capital as a tool for economic development. Through his seminal work in 1993, Putnam presents the different levels of participation in north and south of Italy as having resulted in different levels of economic development. His argument was that networks of civic engagement fostered communication and coordination, and reduced transaction costs through linking ties across group boundaries in a vertical direction.

Another advantage of social capital based on Putnam’s interpretation is good democratic governance. In his defence of participation, Putnam places emphasis on civic engagement and the role of the state and formal institutions like the law in this

regard. In arriving at this position, Putnam was influenced by Alexis de Tocqueville's (1835) construction of civil society (DeFilippis, 2001). De Tocqueville believes democracy in America was built on the tendency of Americans to create and join voluntary associations that were in the domains of neither the state nor the market (DeFilippis, 2001). Putnam's interpretation of de Tocqueville's idea was that social networks and the norms of trustworthiness in a society are influenced by networks of civic engagement:

Recently, American social scientists of a neo-Tocqueville bent have unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement (Putnam, 1995, p66).

The essential component of Putnam's social capital is 'trust' that arises from two sources: Norms of reciprocity and social networks.

The norm of generalized reciprocity is a highly productive component of social capital. Communities in which this norm is followed can more efficiently restrain opportunism and resolve problems of collective action (Putnam, 1993, p 172).

Networks of civic engagement meanwhile facilitate personal interaction that can generate information about the trustworthiness of individuals, and foster increasingly robust norms of reciprocity (Putnam, 1993).

### **3.5.3 The Dark Side of Social Capital**

Despite the fact that social capital is often presented as a positive thing that should be maximised, it can be argued that it also has a negative side.



Portes (1998) recognises four disadvantages of social capital: The first disadvantage is strong bonding ties that exclude non-members from participation and access. The example for this is the traditional monopoly of Jewish merchants over the New York diamond trade or the caste system in India. As Portes states, “the same strong ties that bring benefits to members of a group commonly enable it to bar others from access” (1998, p15). Woolcock (1998) sees this problem from a different angle. His idea is that not only strong ties exclude others from access to group resources, but it also limits members’ economic benefit by restricting their access to outside opportunities through obligating norms. He argues that:

Strong civic groups may stifle macroeconomic growth by securing a disproportionate share of national resources or inhibiting individual economic advancement by placing heavy personal obligations on members that prevent them from participating in broader social networks (Woolcock, 1998, p158).

The second disadvantage of social capital, according to Portes (1998), is the claims made on one’s own resources from other members of the group. The strong ties among groups raise the level of expectations of fellow members to have shares of each other’s success and thereby increase free-riding problems. As Narayan indicates, “poor people from Mali report that accumulation assets at the individual or household levels are difficult or impossible because of the claims that family members make on those assets” (Narayan, 2000, p55).

The third disadvantage, as Portes (1998) indicates, is the severe restriction on the privacy and autonomy of individuals, especially young people and women in highly dense network societies. As Portes (1998) argues, “dense network tying inhabitants together created the ground for an intense community life and strong enforcement of local norms” (1998, p16), which in turn reduces the freedom and autonomy of individuals. Example can be found in many rural areas of developing countries like

India or Iran where women undergo severe restrictions in their social lives due to traditional norms.

The final disadvantage of social capital in the study of Portes (1998) is the kind of solidarity that creates opposition to mainstream society and results in downward levelling norms. Social capital often appears in the form of groups started through common experience of adversity and opposition to mainstream society; like Mafia families, young gangs and prostitution groups. Any success or harmony of individuals within mainstream society weakens the cohesion of the group and results in downward levelling norms.

In the post disaster environment, social capital can be regarded as a useful contributor to the well-being of the affected, defined as the sense of belonging. However, in some circumstances, if the policies fail to address the cultural factors, this capital may be abused or neglected and more negative forms or uses of social capital arise leading to marginalisation. This in turn leads to future vulnerability by undermining individual and collective social resilience.

### **3.5.4 The Contribution of Social Capital to Development Studies**

The concept of social capital has gained currency in recent development literature and has been applied to explain the links that connect people to each other, state, market, resources, rights, and sources that distribute power among any society.

Social capital might facilitate access to other assets, or to the institutions providing those assets. A person's social network might influence their access to schools, health care or institutions providing financial services...another strand in this writing has seen social capital as an important safety net, a means of reducing vulnerability. Here social relationships (formal or

informal) are valued for the role they can play in helping people recover from or cope with crisis, violence or other sources of risk and perturbations (Bebbington, p135, 2008).

Along with behavioural approaches, that use social capital to explain how networks can be beneficial in reducing vulnerabilities through distributing resources and transferring knowledge (Bebbington 2008), a debate on 'synergy' has evolved that highlights the importance of vertical ties that connect people to the main political decision-makers and give social capital and its analysis a more overtly political aspect.

Probing the relationship between the state and the community through the concept of social capital was initially presented by Putnam (1993), and then developed by scholars like Evans (1996) and Woolcock (1998). Synergy for these authors expresses the type of social capital created between state and society. According to Evans: "State-society synergy can be a catalyst for development" (Evans, 1996, p178). Through this link between ordinary citizens and government agencies, the efficiency of plans increases. Putnam presents synergy in this way:

Social capital is not a substitute for effective public policy but rather a prerequisite for it and in part, a consequence of it. Social capital, as our Italian study suggests, works through and with states and markets, not in place of them...wise policy can encourage social capital formation, and social capital itself enhances the effectiveness of government action (Putnam, 1993, p7).

Synergy is about the relationship between community and the state. A conscious community is needed to monitor the state's actions and give feedback to increase the effectiveness of policies. As Bowles and Gintis (2002) rightly argue, communities make an important contribution to governance where central government policies fail because the necessary information to enforce beneficial exchanges cannot effectively

be used by outsiders and central government officials. The state's role is even more important. Along with the power to enforce the rule of law and act as the provider of public goods, the state can play an important role in facilitating the connection between community and the government as well as among communities themselves. Through this process, the problem of social exclusion and isolation can be addressed.

For societal well being or the collective good, a transition has to occur from exclusive loyalty to primary social groups to networks of secondary associations whose most important characteristics is that they bring together people who in some ways are different from the self (Narayan, 1999, p12).

Narayan and Woolcock (2000) put a high currency on the role of state in reducing social vulnerability. Synergy, in the sense that Woolcock and Narayan use it, is the vertical relationship between community groups of society and the state. Narayan and Woolcock (2000) believe synergy is what different societies need to achieve well-being and development and it is the task of the state to create this bridging. As Narayan states, "the state creates the political and social space for the emergence of civil society and citizen action that provide checks and balances on the power of the state, so subjecting itself to public accountability" (Narayan, 1999, p12).

Community-state relationships have also been expanded in poverty alleviation, social welfare, and development literature as the "New Policy Agenda" which puts a great emphasis on civil society, both NGOs and GROs in redistributing institutional arrangements in favour of a more just distribution of power (Edwards and Hulme 1996, Pelling 1998).

This 'new agenda' acknowledges the central role played by social capital in shaping mechanisms of resource distribution and means of access. It promotes participatory methodologies and polycentric institutional arrangements through which decision-making authority and responsibility are re-distributed to overcome inefficiencies inherent in the previous models of

resource distribution. In so-doing it creates the opportunity for greater direct involvement in decision-making for grassroots actors, with all the changes in power and institutional configuration that such a move implies (Pelling, 1998, p470).

### **3.6 Civil Society and Non-governmental Organisations**

A discussion of how to understand NGOs and GROs is connected to the notion of civil society (Bebbington 2002, Edwards 2000).

If civil society were an iceberg, then NGOs would be among the more noticeable of the peaks above the waterline (Edwards, 2000, p8).

However, there is no unanimously agreed definition of civil society. The concept has been shifting and contested since the Enlightenment era in the eighteenth century. Almost all the scholars of this time regarded civil society as an entity outside the state. Marx and Engels distinguished between civil society as the ensemble of socio-economic relations and the forces of production compared to the state as the super structural manifestation of class relations inside civil society. To Hegel, civil society was a social formation intermediate between the family and the state; Gramsci sees civil society as a space between coercive relations of the state and the economic sphere of production (Bebbington 2002).

Recent definitions of civil society get further than merely defining it through its relation to the state. Edwards (2000) believes civil society is:

... the arena in which people come together to advance the interests they hold in common, not for profit or political power, but because they care enough about something to take collective action (p 7).

Mohan (2008) believes recent interpretations of civil society are influenced by the two major socio-political points of view: The neoliberal school and the post-Marxist school. He believes neoliberals see civil society as more a space of private property rights creating market-friendly political institutions and less concerned about the autonomous actions of associations. For the followers of post-Marxist school, on the other hand, civil society is some form of social movement to confront class and position of the dominant.

Van Rooy (1998) classifies the use of civil society in contemporary literature as follows:

- Civil society as values and norms (the kind of well-behaved society that we want to live in, the goal for our political and social efforts);
- Civil society as a collective noun (i.e. NGOs and all actors explicitly involved in change work for social benefit);
- Civil society as a space for action (alongside and interacting with state and market);
- Civil society as a historical moment (a historical moment where a shared public sphere is created in which agreed rules and norms are sustained);
- Civil society as anti-hegemony (a movement towards alternate visions of society that may not necessary join in formal political action); and
- Civil society as an antidote to the state (as an opposition to a centralised or autocratic state).

For this research and due to the increasing growth in the size and number of NGOs, this research studies the NGO form of civil society. As McIlwaine (1998) puts it: “there has...been a tendency to view NGOs as primary ‘vehicles’ or ‘agents’ in civil society”(p416). As such, NGOs are the “‘missing middle’ between citizens and the state” (World Bank, 1997, p114). In the 1990s the number of NGOs increased due to the international and Northern organisations' support for the subject:

The prominence awarded to NGOs and GROs as implementers of the two dimensions of the New Policy Agenda has led official agencies to channel increasing amounts of money to and through them...this has resulted in the explosive growth of NGOs in many southern countries. In Nepal the number of NGOs registered with the government increased from 220 in 1990 to 1210 in 1993 during a donor "spending spree". In Tunisia there were 5186 registered NGOs in 1991 as opposed to 1886 only three years earlier. (Edwards and Hulme, 1996, p962)

Such rapid explosion in the number of NGOs backed by the donors of Northern countries places questions about their agendas and position in the development discourse. Mohan (2002) believes that donors have three main expectations from these NGOs: First, NGOs are significant parts of civil society. Second, they regard NGOs (as representatives of civil society) distinct and often-in conflict with the state. Third, NGOs are facilitators of the democratisation process. They are regarded as a means of channelling opinion into policymaking and increasing peoples' confidence and institutional capacity in involving themselves in public affairs.

In this regard, the current concept of social capital is visualised in practice through NGOs. This research aims to open two debates that help redesign the role of social capital in achieving a more active and less vulnerable community, and distance the concept of NGOs from formal bureaucratic donor-dependant organisations and closer to problem solving efficient entities: positioning state and civil society in governance discourse and what Uphoff (1999) calls, the cognitive form of social capital.

### **3.6.1 Habermas' State**

To find the answer to the relationship between state and civil society, this research benefits from the writing of one prominent scholar in this regard: Habermas. For Habermas, the state is the implementer of the constitution created through the active

performance of civil society. In his view, the state and civil society have mutual contributions to make to each other. In Habermas' view, the state has a powerful position. A strong state is necessary as a sanctioning organisation for enforcing rights that are primarily fostered in public spheres. His cornerstone of government is the constitution which is created and recreated through communicative actions and mediated, enforced and implemented through an organised judiciary. The crux of his debate is that this constitution is not merely normative, mythic or moral, but created (and recreated) through a *rationalised procedure* of lawmaking which involves *all* citizens in a discursive process of opinion and will-formation which as a consequence beget legitimacy (Habermas, 1998).

#### **3.6.1.1 Habermas State and Power**

One may think that government by law in the form of discourse theory transforms the state's position from a domination seeking entity in a vertical system to one of cooperative organization in a horizontal system of governance. The following statements of Habermas may contribute to such perceptions:

“It is not the legal form as such that legitimates the exercise of governmental power but only the bond with *legitimately enacted* law” (Habermas, 1998, p135)

Or when he says

“...in the democratic rule of law, political power is differentiated into communicative power and administrative power” (Habermas, 1998, p136).

However, on the contrary, Habermas' idea reinforces the state's domination since he presents it as a “subjectless” legislative structure that once created (due to the legitimacy it gained through “reasonably structured deliberations”) would be hard to be conquered by the agencies it dominates:



[government by law in the form of discourse theory approach] pulls back into the “subjectless” forms of communication circulating through forums and legislative bodies. Only in this anonymous form can its communicatively fluid powers bind the administrative power of the state apparatus to the will of the citizens (Habermas, 1998, p136).

In Habermas’ model, the administrative power gives even more authority to the state. Presenting law as a *de facto* social power brings about stabilisation of behavioural expectations and norms. Courts become key elements of organising behavioural conflicts and harmonising power centres. They decide what is legal or illegal. As a consequence, power serves to establish the judiciary as a branch of the state (Habermas, 1998). Governments’ authority extends since law “generates” government institutions, procedures and official powers.

### **3.6.1.2 Habermas, Legitimacy and Power**

Habermas believes legitimacy of political power has two sources: Normative authority of a judge-king enjoying a superior reputation, and social power authorised by sacred law. For the second type of legitimacy, political power and law bind together through the institutionalisation of offices that provide the exercise of political authority with an administrative staff; a model he calls state-organised authority. Thereby, law and political power intensify each other: “Not only does law now legitimate political power; power can make use of law as a means of organizing political rule” (Habermas, 1998, p142).

Habermas in *Between Facts and Norms* (1998) argues that any society must benefit from mechanisms of action cooperation and mutual understanding to resolve conflicts. According to him, these mechanisms can be of two forms: Either regulation of a conflict caused by the clash of individual action orientation, or with cooperative realisation of collective goals.

In Habermas' debate two contradictory forms of power can be realised: The power that is impossible for anyone to possess called communicative power, and a power that facilitates state's domination called administrative power. In developing communicative power theory, he is influenced by Arendt. He quotes from her; "power springs up between men when they act together and it vanishes the moment they disperse...power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" (Arendt as cited by Habermas, 1998, p147-148).

Arendt's idea about power is the founding of institutions through collective decisions and the creation of legitimate law. In Habermas' view, Arendt's communicative power theory lacks the political exercise of administrative and executive function: "the agreement between words and deeds may be the yardstick for a regime's legitimacy" (Habermas, 1998, p150). The role of law, as Habermas indicates here becomes helpful in translating communicative power into administrative power. Habermas continues to prevent abuse of dominating powers over administrative systems. Communicative power must be the only source that permits administrative power to regenerate and administrative power should not reproduce itself on its own terms; any illegitimate intervention of social power must be prohibited.

In Habermas' model, moral values and citizen's institutionalised will (laws) are separated. "Whereas moral rules...express a universal will pure and simple, laws also give expression to the particular legal community" (Habermas, 1998, p152). The legitimacy of state comes from communicative power of citizens. A state's authority derives from laws citizens give themselves in a discursively structured opinion and will formation. Instead of taken for granted moral and ethical values, in Habermas' model rational discourses, design norms and these norms through institutionalisation of interlinked forms of communication becomes laws. Legitimacy comes from valid legal norms and not valid moral norms; in other words, valid moral norms can be "right" but not "legitimate" as far as they are not legal.

Such a democratic model, since it is impossible for all citizens to share their beliefs, can come into practice through parliamentary procedure. For such practice, the fundamental condition of its legitimacy is representativeness. Hence, guaranteed autonomy of public sphere, competition between different political parties, and parliamentary principles are essential elements of a democratic society.

### **3.6.1.3 Habermas and Foucault (Rationality and Power)**

Foucault disagrees with Habermas' view on power. Foucault's analysis of power, as Flyvbjerg (1998) points out:

can be constituted only if it frees itself completely from this representation of power that I would term..."*juridico-discursive*"...a certain image of power-law, of power-sovereignty (Foucault 1980 p90 as cited by Flyvbjerg 1998 p214).

Flyvbjerg argues that while Foucault's idea is 'cut off the head of the king', in Habermas' model the head of the king "is still very much on, in the sense that sovereignty is a prerequisite for the regulation of power by law" (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p214).

Habermas and Foucault are both concerned about domination. They try to find ways to minimise domination and create a balanced power structure but they present different approaches for achieving this goal. While Habermas applies an objective stance and sees the constitution as a rational way of moving toward democracy, Foucault sees the process of democratisation as a completely subjective and context-dependence struggle of power. Habermas finds the solution in consensus and collective will formation, Foucault realises resistance and struggle as the basis for the practice of freedom (Flyvbjerg, 1998).

Habermas believes civil society is needed to absorb the unequal distribution of social positions and power differentials resulting from them. Civil society to him is a political network of voluntary associations that is detached from class structure and facilitates the exercise of civic autonomy (Habermas, 1998).

Habermas' view of civil society is neither neoliberal nor Marxist. In the view of Habermas, through discursive communication, citizens first reach self-understanding. Civil society is conceived as a democratic self-organisation and legally institutionalised. This is in contrast with the Marxist view that demands revolutionary transformation through class conflict fighting domination (DeLanty, 1997). It is not liberal because the state has great power through administration. Despite the respect that Habermas has for the potential social power of civil society and the freedom that can be generated through civil society, he believes that in the administrative framework, civil society is still restricted.

Even a political process emerging from civil society must gain the measure of autonomy necessary to keep the administrative system ...from sinking to the level of one party among others (Habermas, 1998, p176).

He indicates that civil society can transform its social power either indirectly through manipulating public opinion or directly through administration.

In contrast to Habermas' civil society, in Foucault's view, civil society has conflict and power at its centre and is alien with the consensus and conflict-free bargaining. States and authorities inevitably violate civil society activities and can use constitution as a means to legitimate their violation.

#### **3.6.1.4 Critiques**

Habermas is criticised for generalising its occidental rational behaviour and being insensitive to cultural contexts (Delanty 1997, Benhabib 1992, Flyvbjerg 1998).

Habermas, presupposes that human social life is based upon rational processes for establishing reciprocal understanding ; constitutions is all it takes for uniting citizens in a pluralist society (Flyvbjerg, 1998). In 1998, Habermas clarified his position by stating that his model refers to societies free from religious or metaphysical thinking:

A fundamentalist self-understanding often privileges value choices that subordinate individual rights to collective goals and thus favour non-egalitarian regulations. Only under the conditions of post metaphysical thinking do ethical-political discourses lead to regulations that lie *per se* in the equal interest of all members (Habermas, 1998, p167).

DeLanty (1997) critiques Habermas for his moral universalism. He observes that Habermas' social theory universalises morality in the sense that it tries to provide a normative basis for "civilized humanity": "Universal morality cannot be reduced to self-interest any more than it can be reduced to culture and identity" (DeLanty, 1997, p33). He argues that this occidental rationality is fostered through a comparison of modernity and the pre-modern tradition of Europe and is based on European enlightenment; hence cannot simply be applied elsewhere.

Habermas' model is also critiqued for its over emphasis on law as the cornerstone of democracy. Paley (2002) argues that law can be double sided: "While people use it to resist and contest power, they are also subjugated by it" (p487).

Another critique of Habermas' rational communicative model is its absence of a practical aspect and its limited engagement with the dynamics of power. He is critiqued for being unrealistic in his modelling:

He describes to us the utopia of communicative rationality but not how to get there...it is easy to point to constitution writing and institutional development as a solution; it is something else to implement specific constitutional and institutional changes (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p215 & 228).

His focus on communicative power dismisses the fact that communication can be penetrated by power. Moreover, as DeLanty (1997) indicates, it is less possible for minorities to conceive a majority by the means of better argument. As Flyvbjerg (1998) rightly points out, communication can be power sensitive through non-rational rhetoric and be used to maintain dominant interests:

Something infinitely more complex than these phenomena are at work in real life situations, perhaps humans are infinitely more complex than Habermas' homo democraticus. People know how to be, at the same time, tribal and democratic, dissidents and patriots, experts and judging how far a democratic constitution can be bent and used in non-democratic ways for personal and group advantages (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p217)

Another critique is that in Habermas' view participants are rational and decent. According to Delanty (1997), "social life does not take the form of a community of scholars rationally debating a problem which can be objectively described in a theoretical manner" (p34). Flyvbjerg (1998) argues that Habermas, unlike some other scholars like Machiavelli, assumes away this idea that all men are wicked and bases his model on rational and civilised citizens.

Moreover, DeLanty (1997) disagrees with the form of social learning Habermas believes will occur in discursive communication. He believes this process of social learning will only take place under the culture of occidental modernity which is particular to modern European-American culture: "The historical process of social learning through which universalistic principles emerge can occur in all societies and does not need to follow the particular logic of Western modernity" (1997, p42); societies learn in different ways.

### 3.6.2 Alternatives to State-centred Governance

Add to the critiques, the evidence that states often hinder civil society; especially when this involves criticism of a state's policies or practice.

The ideal situation is when different organisations and agencies (in a community that is concerned with creating the conditions for collective action and public order) act in such harmony that their composition results in giving 'power' to citizens. These citizens are playing active roles in transforming their environment into a better place for living. Power, according to Held, is:

... the capacity of agents, agencies or institutions to maintain or transform their environment, social or physical, and it concerns the resources which underpin this capacity and the forces that shape and influence its exercise (Held, 1995, p170, as cited by Goverde *et al*, 2000, p103).

However, unequal distribution of power and information asymmetries resides within community as well as between the community and other political actors (Pelling, 2003).

In the neoliberal view, which is supported by the World Bank, in contrast to Habermas' view, the role of the state shifts from one of control to one of coordination. In the late 1990s, the World Bank supported a series of programmes in Eastern European countries and Commonwealth independent states which were subjected as programmes with 'good governance'. The aim of these programmes was to shrink the state and make it more efficient, and to shift the balance of power in society from governments and the public sector to private individuals and groups. It was argued that 'good governance' opens new windows for self-reliance and participation, which creates opportunity for civil societies to activate and reform unresponsive and unaccountable governments (de Alcantra, 1998, p108). Good governance arose as the means to promote order and justice especially in

development studies. The role of NGOs and institutions was highlighted in this regard.

As High and Nemes argue (2005), while governments deal with making and enforcing decisions through centralised control and hierarchical structures, governance is concerned with networks and institutional arrangements that reflect more horizontal structures and less central power. In this regard, the co-ordination and collaboration between different actors are crucial in promoting development.

The literature on governance is greatly concerned with the degree of centralisation of government. Followers of participatory development approaches see states as inefficient and ineffective in delivering development projects. Chambers (1988) argues that large, centralised and hierarchical organisations, such as governments, tend to simplify, centralise and standardise policy and practice. Moreover, centralised structures, as is argued by Tisdell and Roy (1998), reduce the effective managing of lower level government while decentralised structures reduce the need for coordination.

### **3.6.3 Examples of State-centred Programmes**

In a relevant issue to this research of post-disaster or post-war reconstruction efforts, especially in developing countries, the state centralised approach too often results in the reproduction of vulnerability. Following the Marmara earthquake (1999) which killed over 17,000 people and destroyed about 10,000 houses, NGOs and the media criticised the initially ineffective response of the state and the underlying corruption (Jalali, 2002). This response received a strong reaction from the Turkish state whereby some NGOs were asked to leave the region through systematic control and threats. A Turkish TV channel was closed down for a week by the government for its critical reports. Only designated state authorities and a few state-friendly NGOs were allowed to deliver aid to earthquake victims (ibid).



As the study of Christoplos (2001) shows, in post-Mitch Nicaragua, the role of NGOs was questionable until they started to increase their links with each other and the local government. The role of NGOs was one of dissatisfaction. NGOs were viewed with great suspicion by government and citizens, and their actions often did not follow the ideals they claimed to represent. Their capacities were low and consequently they were reluctant to get involved in disaster management. Their co-ordination with other NGOs was limited because of traditional opposition and competition for the funding needed to work. In terms of their relationship to the government, the situation was not good, as Christoplos (2001) argues, their status was one of confrontation with the government rather than joint action in the field.

According to NGOs, the government did not make any effort to communicate and collaborate with them. On the other hand, state institutions were suspicious of NGOs because many of their officials were linked to the opposition administration of the 1980s. Citizens do not openly recognise that NGOs are not part of civil society, but presume they are dominated by the intellectual elite of middle-class citizens. In the post-Mitch period, signs of collaboration between NGOs and local government appeared. NGOs found that local governments were often less political than central government. Leadership became essential: "Many mayors acted decisively, more as an expression of their natural leadership than as the result of any formally established arrangements" (Christoplos, 2001, p 248).

The inclusion of local citizens in reconstruction is a very sensitive issue and is not an easy goal to be achieved; especially in centralised politics with limited civil society capacity. Geipel (1991) has studied in detail the long-term consequences of reconstruction after ten years since the 1977 Friuli earthquake in Italy. As he documented, during the immediate aftermath of the earthquake in the relief phase, the significant participation of local agencies and national and international organisations conveyed a sense of optimism for the future among victims to be able to overcome the shock. After the dynamism of this period, victims enthusiastic for accomplishing the reconstruction and building houses were suddenly cut short. This

was until the necessary laws were implemented, modalities of compensation payment settled, and the necessity controls established and plans made.

This forced inactivity of victims, capable and willing to act on their own, led to accusations against the administration (which deteriorated trust in the government) of illegal activities like illicit buildings (which damage community ties) and apathy. Moreover, the reconstruction plan that was designed to restore the *status quo ante* (needless to say that such approach is loss-based rather than needs based) resulted in the out-migration of young and active members of the city after a few years because the city was built for 1976 not 1996. The supply of buildings was more than needed and remained vacant. The consumption of alcohol and television entertainment increased, indicating a retreat from community life into the private sphere. Thus, both physical and social fabrics have not been successfully reconstructed.

Reconstruction of Kobe, Japan, is a great example of how government plans can slow down the reconstruction process and put people's lives on hold. The studies of Comerio (1998) on Hanshin earthquake (Kobe), Japan, in 1995, show that within a month after the earthquake, the Japanese government made great efforts to organise reconstruction committees, passing the necessary legislation, and planning and financing the reconstruction. However, one year after the event, some buildings were still facing reconstruction problems due to multiple ownership claims, the death of the owners, or through lack of funds. Those who were able or willing to rebuild their houses using their savings found that they had to wait months to find a private contractor. Consequently, speculators have been buying up heavily damaged sites. Funding the repairs was another problem. Some homeowners had to live in damaged structures for years because they had to rely on themselves through lack of support. People whose buildings were situated in government redevelopment project areas had to wait until government plans were completed (which took five to ten years) in order to make realistic decisions about their own property. Over this time span, elderly and poor citizens were residing in temporary housing until they could find alternative housing on their own.

The United States has experienced numerous examples of the loss-base reconstruction programmes that exacerbate social inequalities. Federal disaster assistance is designed for homeowners. Following Hurricane Hugo in 1989, as the studies of Comerio (1998) show, middle class owners of Charleston, South Carolina, in coastal communities, collected some insurance and used government grants and loans to repair their roofs, replace their carpets, and build swimming pools before tougher coastal regulations were enforced. In contrast, apartment dwellers and renters had difficulties finding alternative housing at the same rent. The rural poor had little access to any form of public assistance and depended on help from private charities to repair and replace their damaged housing.

Another example of owner-driven reconstruction policy is the policy applied following Hurricane Andrew 1992 in Dade County, Florida. The reconstruction policy was again a pro-middle-class approach supported by insurance and federal aid. Despite this, low-priced homes were constructed, but they were built by developers and sold to newcomers to the area. The limited numbers of affordable rental units available for disaster victims drove the poorest population out of Dade County (Comerio, 1998).

The studies of Kamel and Loukaitou-Sidens (2004) on reconstruction after the Northridge earthquake 1994 show that federal assistance based on absolute losses rather than emergency need led to the further marginalisation of the already marginalised and favoured owner occupied and secure households.

Similarly, after Loma Prieta earthquake in California, USA in 1989, temporary housing and reconstruction funding were allocated by the centralised reconstruction plan to middle and upper class homeowners much easier than to renters or subsidised housing residents (Comerio, 1997). The earthquake hit hardest in low-income housing in downtown San Francisco, Oakland, Santa Cruz and Watsonville and the market failed to provide affordable rents for those affected. Less than half of the low-income housing units destroyed by the earthquake were rebuilt (ibid). Such loss-

base policies exacerbate the vulnerability of the communities to disaster rather than helping to minimise the vulnerability.

### **3.6.4 Why Centralised Programmes are Ineffective**

The above examples show that where plans are centrally designed and the voice of the local people and especially the most vulnerable find no way to be expressed, the efforts for development, which are often costly, not only fail to create better access to resources for the residents and the affected, but increase the vulnerability of the most vulnerable groups in society.

In order to reduce the vulnerability of affected communities, reconstruction plans should prioritise assistance according to need rather than the loss and in response to the cultural and traditional values of residents. To do so, there must be participation from the local residents. Centralised plans and programmes too easily fail to address these needs. This can be explained as a result of two key reasons: The blue-print approach, and professional/urban bias.

#### **3.6.4.1 The Blue-print Approach**

The blue-print approach draws from the work of Korten in 1980. He argued that many development projects follow implementation through a conventional bureaucratic structure where programmes and targets are formulated centrally with little regard to the willingness or capability of people to respond. The projects are expected to be efficient, clearly ordered and defined, specialised and with visible outcomes to be cost predictable and defensible in budget presentations.

In practice, rural development projects turn out to be ill-defined in terms of the objectives, unclear task requirements, unpredictable costs, and outcomes unbounded by time. According to Korten, development projects instead shall be flexible and open to learning through enhancing their capacity for responsive and anticipatory

adaptation. For that, they need to embrace error, plan with the people, and link knowledge to action.

One of numerous weaknesses of centrally designed programs is that planners proceed as if they were writing on a clean slate and possessing all the knowledge relevant to improving the villagers' life. In reality they are making interventions into well-established socio-technical systems within which the poor have, over many years, worked out appropriate methods to meet their basic survival needs otherwise they would not still be around (Korten, 1980, p498).

Indigenous technologies are usually within the control of the community. Building on, rather than replacing those technologies reduces the likelihood that the program intervention will "de-skill" the villagers and, thus, increase their dependence on external experts and suppliers over whom they have no social control (Korten, 1980, p499).

#### **3.6.4.2 Professional/Urban-Bias**

The second reason is the distance that decision-makers keep with the local people to make 'professional' plans. These plans benefit from highly skilled professionals who are often from upper class urban areas. The problem is labelled 'urban-bias' in this research. The expectations of affected people should be considered seriously. According to Schwab *et al* (1998) planners should remember that citizens of the area have a post-disaster plan in mind even before the planners begin their work. Contradictions between the prepared official plans and the people's plan, hinders the success of reconstruction. As Quarantelli rightly argues "realistic disaster planning requires that plans be adjusted to people and not that people be forced to adjust to plans" (Quarantelli, 1982, p2).

Michael Lipton is the pioneer of developing urban bias theory through his studies in Africa in the 1960s. He believed that governments of many countries of the South tend to favour allocating resources to towns and cities as opposed to villages. His idea was that urban areas get a considerably higher proportion of public spending, especially in health and education, and this results in a rural skills drain as educated younger rural dwellers leave to work in urban areas.

There are different critiques about Lipton's theory, for example, that Lipton neglects the power of the rural elite. Further, that in places he accounts for members of the rural elite as members of the urban class and members of the urban poor as part of the rural classes (Byres 1979, Griffin 1977). Moreover, Jones *et al* (2008) challenge Lipton's idea through the fact that urban poverty in many places is higher than rural poverty and the definitions of urban and rural are not stable.

Nevertheless, Lipton's theory is valuable in bringing to the table the notion of urban bias, albeit from an economic point of view. However, as Jones *et al* (2008) rightly argue, non-economic forms of urban bias are under-researched:

Many rural people are stereotyped as backward or ignorant, and are treated by government officials on that basis. They might experience urban bias in terms other than those set out in Lipton's urban bias theory (UBT), but which are nonetheless consistent with his view that key development actors are disposed to equate the urban with the modern or developed...It is thus prudent to retain the provocation set out by Lipton's model...while avoiding reference to urban bias either as a social fact or as a pathology that always needs correction (Jones *et al*. 2008, p246).

Studies of Chambers on rural development in his seminal book "Putting the last first" (1986), enriches the urban bias theory. As he asserts, education and professional training builds bias of perception and a mutual attraction to and reinforcement of power, prestige, resources, professionals, professional trainings and the capacity to

generate and disseminate knowledge at the urban core. According to him, professional training inculcates an arrogance in which superior knowledge and status are assumed. In this respect, the rural poor are seen as ignorant and backward while dwellers of the urban core are seen as more prestigious and professional.

Chambers continues that despite all its advantages, professionalism and specialisation make it hard for observers to understand the linkages of deprivation for the urban poor. The nature of professionalism makes professionals narrowly single-minded because it programmes them to examine what is going on in the framework of their specifications but makes them blind to see what lies outside it: "They do their own thing and only their own thing. They look for and find what fits their ideas" (p23).

Hence when it comes to development projects to probe rural poverty, the practitioners of development become outsiders who, because of the urban biased nature of their trainings and life-style, become disabled in observing and addressing the vulnerability of rural poor.

Outsiders are people concerned with rural development who are themselves neither rural nor poor. Many are headquarters and field staff of government organizations in the Third World...Outsiders under perceive rural poverty. They are attracted to and trapped in urban 'cores' which generate and communicate their own sort of knowledge while rural 'peripheries' are isolated and neglected. The direct rural experience of most urban-based outsiders is limited to the brief and hurried visits from urban centres...as a result the poorer rural people are little seen and even less is the nature of their poverty understood (Chambers, 1983, p2).

According to Twigg (2004), the relationship between the outside disaster specialists and local people involves differences in outlook, power and resources. Outsiders have different educational, social and cultural backgrounds. They are often hired by

organisations with access to a considerable budget (like governmental organisations) and this gives them the confidence to believe that their efforts are appropriate and hence they may be tempted to intervene without waiting to find out if they are really needed or wanted by a community.

He believes that because of the impossibility of ever being able to put oneself fully into somebody else's position and see things through their eyes, outsiders find it difficult to understand the community's environment, needs and points of view, especially when funds are made available too widely or too easily. In Twigg's (2004) view, as long as outsiders remain facilitators and their work is guided by people's needs and aspirations they can be genuine partners in transformation. He continues that, in order to obtain such transformation, local community should actively participate in making decisions about the implementation of the processes, programmes and projects which affect them.

Participation should empower individuals and communities by involving them in: defining problems and needs, deciding solutions to them, implementing agreed activities to achieve those solutions, and evaluating the results - they must also share the benefits of the initiatives. Participation should enable those who are usually the most vulnerable and marginalized within their community to be heard and have their due influence on decision-making. (Twigg, 2004, p118)

Twigg (2004) realises two categories for participatory approaches: Guided participation (also known as instrumental participation) and people-centred participation (also known as transformative participation)<sup>1</sup>. Guided participation seeks to include people in improvement projects, mostly in implementation and sometimes planning, but the projects are still initiated, funded and ultimately

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<sup>1</sup> This classification of participation is often expressed in different forms; "participation as a means" and "participation as an end" (Nelson and Wright, 1995) - "passive" and "active" participation (Midgeley 1986, Narayan and Pritchett 2000).



controlled by professional planners from outside the community. The planners determine the level of popular participation. People-centred participation, on the other hand, addresses issues of power and control. Its view is much wider than the technical and managerial aspects of programmes and projects. It is concerned with the nature of the society in which these programmes and projects are developed. It aims at the empowerment of communities.

People-centered participation is founded on the belief that ordinary people are capable of critical reflection and analysis, and that their knowledge is relevant and necessary. (Twigg, 2004, p117)

As Mohan (2001) rightly puts; "the first move is to acknowledge that those we view as powerless are not" (p164). He believes this notion helps us to move beyond the patronising attitudes that "they" need to be empowered according to our agenda. Rahnema (1992) argues that:

there is a different power which is not always perceived as such, and cannot be actualized in the same manner, yet it is very real in many ways [it] is constituted by the thousands of centers and informal networks of resistance which ordinary people put up (Rahnema 1992, p 123).

### **3.6.5 Transformative Participation**

For a participatory approach to be transformative there is a need to redefine the role of agencies in the community. According to Pelling:

There has been a tendency to ascribe roles to the community (a source of local knowledge, a source of cheap or free labour, a source to shape for infrastructural maintenance) rather than first asking how a community is structured and which groups are most likely to experience the costs and benefits of participation (Pelling, 2003, p83).

The notion of empowerment is linked with the issue of citizenship and rights. The growing acceptance of the rights-based approach is closely linked to the entitlement argument of Amartya Sen. Sen's (1981) work on entitlements and capabilities stresses that, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, what counts is not what poor people possess, but what it enables them to do. The entitlement concept, as discussed earlier, draws attention away from the mere possession of goods, towards rights, the command people have over goods, using various economic, political and social opportunities within the legal system. Rights in this approach are understood not simply as formal laws and regulations but as a "political tool for use in the dynamic process of claiming resources and ensuring justice" (VeneKlasen 2004, p10). Thus, participation is understood as a process by which individuals are empowered to take part in decision-making processes and claim their rights while ensuring that authorities are held responsible to realise their rights and answer their claims. The role of the state is very important in this regard.

### **3.6.6 How can NGOs contribute to Transformative Participation?**

NGOs have gained currency in recent debates on participation. NGOs are regarded by neoliberals as agencies that contribute to economic efficiency and political pluralism. Followers of radical perspectives see NGOs as facilitators for social transformation.

However as Hulme and Edwards (1996) argue, the role of NGOs in the process of democratisation remains questioned by some scholars since they have failed to develop effective strategies and mutually beneficial links between the state and citizens to promote democratisation. Further, Hulme and Edwards state that NGOs and GROs have failed to address how to engage in the political process to achieve fundamental change in the distribution of power and resources, without becoming involved in partisan politics and the distortions which accompany the pursuit of state power. The question remains:

What role can opportunistic NGOs with no mission other than the winning of donor or government contracts play in democratization? This is of particular concern where new NGOs are being formed very rapidly on the back of readily available official funding with weak social roots and no independent supporter base (Edwards and Hulme, 1996, p966).

Approaching this challenge it is helpful to examine two expressions of social capital: Structural forms (like NGOs) and cognitive forms, i.e. trusts.

### **3.6.7 Cognitive Social Capital**

Uphoff (1999) distinguishes between two forms of social capital: Cognitive and structural. The structural category refers to various forms of organisation or the structure of social relations like rules, networks, and formal organisations. The cognitive dimension derives from mental processes and ideas created by culture and ideology including norms and values. To him, it is upon norms and values that rationalise cooperative behaviour and make it respectable. He continues that these two domains are connected because though networks can have observable lives of their own, ultimately they all come from cognitive processes and are linked in practice by expectations. He believes the social part of social capital means "some degree of mutuality, some degree of common identity, some degree of cooperation for mutual not just personal, benefit" (Uphoff, p222, 1999).

According to Uphoff (1999), creating social capital requires more than just introducing roles. Roles are defined by mutual expectations about what any person in a certain role should and will do under various conditions. They pattern people's behaviour in predictable and productive ways. In this regard, NGOs should be studied more deeply in terms of their mission and role in society.

As Newton (1997) rightly argues, the disadvantage of Putnam's definition of social capital is that it runs different conceptual things (trust, norms, and networks) together that should be separated; the better to study their empirical relationships:

If we separate the three aspects of social capital, then a series of questions arise about its nature, causes, and consequences. Is there an empirical relationship between individual involvement in social networks and voluntary associations, on the one hand, and relatively high levels of trust and reciprocity on the other?...what sorts of organizations are best at generating what forms of social capital and why? (Newton, 1997, p583-4).

Uphoff (1999) believes the mission of structural forms of social capital including NGOs is to create a culture of friendship and trust. He believes the contribution of social capital in development discourse is to create values, attitudes, social structures and relationships that reinforce psychological investment of trust in each other.

Social and political as well as economic relations are all more productive when people relate to each other not as strangers, and certainly not as enemies, but to some extent as friends. This reflects and reinforces trust, which in all accounts of social capital is recognized as the essential "glue" for society. (Uphoff, 1999, p227).

In a similar argument, Newton (1997) states that social capital focuses on those cultural values and attitudes that allow citizens to cooperate, trust, understand, and empathise with each other - to treat each other as fellow citizens, rather than as strangers, competitors, or potential enemies.

Newton (1997) discusses two forms of trust: 'Thick' trust and 'thin' trust. In small face-to-face communities, thick trust is the essential ingredient of mechanical solidarity which is generated by intensive, daily contact between people, often of the same tribe, class, or ethnic background. Communities of this kind are generally

socially homogeneous, isolated, and exclusive, and able to exercise the strict social sanctions necessary to reinforce thick trust. On the other hand, thin trust associates with the organic solidarity of looser, more amorphous, secondary relations which are the cornerstone of modern society. This trust is the product of weak ties, which according to Granovetter (1973) constitute a powerful and enduring basis for social integration in modern, large-scale society (Newton, 1997).

Newton (1997) believes the task of NGOs is to create a social space for citizens to communicate, cooperate and empathise with each other rather than merely ask for membership and symbolic attachment because they want to be allied with ‘the cause’.

...checkbook organizations may contribute to pluralist democracy (their external effects) but have little if any, impact on social capital (internal effects). They tend to be the opposite of face-to-face, informal groups such as conscious-raising groups or groups that meet once a month to discuss a book, which are more likely to have stronger internal than external effects (Newton, 1997, p582).

There is then the implication that it is possible to distinguish a ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ type of NGO. As Bebbington (2006) states, the definition of NGOs is contested. This research refers to NGOs as:

Autonomous, non-profit-making, self governing and campaigning organisations with a focus on the well-being of others (Bebbington, 2006, p324).

There is also another realisation of NGOs that has a more political than behavioural aim which is to challenge the state for alternative policies and perspectives. Mercer (2002) believes this kind of NGO is essential for the process of democratisation:

More civic actors means more opportunities for a wider range of interest groups to have a 'voice', more autonomous organizations to act in a 'watchdog' role *vis-à-vis* the state, and more opportunities for networking and creating alliances of civic actors to place pressure on the state (Mercer, 2002, p8).

The United Nations (2003) also presents NGOs as organisations that check the state:

Any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-orientated and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to Governments, monitor policies and encourage political participation at the community level (Teegan *et al* 2004, p466 as cited by Bebbington 2006).

### **3.6.8 Connecting NGOs to People and States**

Now that the role and character of NGOs has been discussed, two notions should be addressed: First, why would people initially want to participate in such self governing organisations for the well-being of others? And second, how and why centralised and autocratic states would/should allow or support such activities that might lead to the transfer of power?

According to Cleaver (2001), in participatory discourse it is usually assumed that people will participate because they find it in their best interests or because they perceive this as socially responsible and in the best interests of community development. Cleaver believes such perceptions allow little place for personal psychological motivation, or for the benefit of individual need, respect or purpose, which may be independent of material gain.

Here the works of Arnstein and Korten helps us to understand these confusions through the definitions of NGOs. Arnstein (1969) believes participatory approaches guide people through an evolutionary path that will transform them from passive residents to active power-holder citizens. Arnstein (1969) recognises eight levels of participation to increase citizen's power in decision-making: Manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. The first two levels are recognised as non-participation levels because they are not designed to enable people to participate in planning but to enable power-holders to educate or cure the participants. In the next three levels (informing, consultation and placation) despite efforts that would be made by power-holders to let the voice of have-nots be heard, there are no means to ensure that these opinions would be implemented and would end up in changing the status quo. They are the levels of partnership, delegated power and citizen control which consider citizens as powerful actors who have the ability to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders and at best, have-nots to obtain the majority of decision-making seats or full managerial power (Arnstein, 1969).

In a similar progressive ontology, Korten (1987) realises three generations of NGOs categorised by their orientations in strategy programming: (a) Relief and welfare (b) local self-reliance (c) sustainable systems development. Based on his discussion, NGOs that work in development use one or a combination of these strategies in accomplishing their mission. Relief and welfare strategy models aim to deliver welfare services to the poor by focusing on immediate need through direct action; such as the distribution of food, the fielding of health teams and the provision of shelter - all funded by private contributions on an individual family scale. Self-reliant local development models, shaped as an answer to the limitations of the previous strategy, undertakes community development style projects in a small scale local group or neighbourhood scale with importance placed on local self-reliance ,anticipating that benefit would be sustained beyond the period of the NGO assistance.

The third generation of NGOs fostered from the experiences of these first two generations, aims to cover dysfunctional aspects of the previous strategies. It focuses on facilitating sustainable change in policy and institutional settings on a regional or national basis through less direct involvement of NGOs and more involvement with a variety of public and private organisations that control resources and policies that bear on local development - such as local governments and private enterprises. According to Korten, the success of this strategy depends on “skilfully positioning the NGOs resources in relation to the target system... in such a way as to facilitate accelerated learning by the organisations which comprise that system” (1987, p149).

To start to build the participatory process and trigger residents to feel responsible and find the power to change their environment an 'entrance point' (as Twigg calls it) is needed. The choice of entrance point, according to Twigg (2004), depends on the nature of the community concerned. It might be through traditional local authorities such as village elders or religious leaders, or through traditional forms of association such as forums for regulating power or occupational groups. In many cases it might be directly through the poorest and most vulnerable like women-headed households (Twigg, 2004). Disasters – both through risk reduction and reconstruction - are good opportunities for encouraging residents to participate and create great entrance points.

Disasters have the potential to create a moment of dislocation in the powers of status quo. Social disruption can take many forms, from looting and lawlessness to more emancipatory activities where previously repressive state authorities are temporarily unable to exert control over local areas, and alternative forms of organization can spring up during periods of emergency response, relief and rehabilitation (Pelling, 2003, p45).



### **3.7 Addressing Participatory Institutions in Post-disaster Reconstruction**

Disaster literature classifies disaster into phases according to actions and conditions that take place before, during or after a disaster. This division arose in 1977 from the work of Kates, Bowden and Haas. They divided disaster recovery into four phases: First, the emergency period which covers the initial hours after the disaster and is characterised by those coping actions that the community was forced to do due to the loss of property, lives, and injuries. Second, the restoration period, characterised by mending and renovations of utility, housing, commercial and industrial structures capable of being restored until major services and transportation return and rubble removed. Third, during the replacement reconstruction period, where social and economic activities return to the pre-disaster period and the population is replaced. Fourth is the commemorative, betterment and developmental reconstruction period which is portrayed as memorialising the disaster to mark the city's post-disaster improvement, and to serve its future growth and development (Kates *et al*, 1977, p 2-3).

Despite the fact that this process seems logical in theory, the experiences of disasters prove that this model does not reflect reality and that reality is much more complicated. Rubin (1985) argues that many of these periods overlap to a greater extent and the theory suggests that different groups within a community could be in different stages of recovery and reconstruction at the same time. As Kamel (2004) rightly points out, disaster process classifications vary depending on the object of analysis and methodology used. The threat of this theory is, as Rubin (1985) discusses, that any assumption of uniformity in the recovery process could contribute to exacerbate these inequalities by ignoring their existence.

For the purposes of this research, two main post-disaster stages are identified: Relief and reconstruction. The definition of relief in this paper is ISDR's definition as, "the provision of assistance or intervention during or immediately after a disaster to meet the preservation and basic subsistence needs of those people affected" (ISDR terminology). The use of term "reconstruction" in this study is synonymous to the definition of ISDR on recovery: "Decisions and actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring or improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community, while encouraging and facilitating necessary adjustments to reduce disaster risk" (ISDR terminology). It should be noted that when each phase ends or starts is not easily distinguishable and these stages usually overlap: The factors of development can be re-established in the relief phase. Depending on the situation of households, the relief phase may last longer for some more vulnerable households (Schwab *et al* 1992, Rubin 1985, Kamel *et al* 2004). Moreover, there is no uniform guideline for reconstruction. The reconstruction phase is often considered too huge a task - one which is outside of the private sector's capacity to handle. In non-federal nations and where the extent of disaster is huge the main stake-holder of reconstruction becomes the central state. Depending on the intended outcomes, different strategies are defined.

### **3.7.1 Strategies of Reconstruction**

According to Geipel (1991), the variety of strategies comes from whether strategies should be designed according to: Individual loss, principle of need, or the principle of equality. The first solution fixes the social *status quo ante*, the second leads to redistribution in favour of the poor, and the third guarantees supply for all while reducing differences (Geipel, 1991, p151). Geipel (1991) distinguishes three alternatives for reconstruction:

First, there is no defined aim for the time after disaster. In this scenario, subsidies are most likely to be given in accordance to the financial or political power structure; free areas or buildings are seized by squatters; gaps between the rich and poor widen; no economic development occurs; trust between people and the government vanishes; and apathy, depression, and escapism to drugs and alcohol prevails. Natural disaster becomes social disaster.

Second, restoration of the *status quo* is sought. Reconstruction is the responsibility of the owner and the planning process is decentralised at the community level. At the beginning, there is high solidarity in the community. The further reconstruction proceeds, the more luxurious and wasteful buildings arise. The former power relations within the community are re-established; connections and inside informants become more important. As a consequence, solidarity decreases.

Third, reconstruction is seen as a chance to realise improvements: Identical aid is given to all affected and central planning rules at a higher administrative level. Reconstruction is co-operative between people and state. Co-operative and public building is easier and cheaper to control and survey and consequently private building reduces. This leads to dissatisfaction on the part of the victims who have to wait and cannot do things by themselves.

It seems that Geipel has seen improvement as equity. In his third scenario, reconstruction is seen as an opportunity to make a more uniform society through identical aid to all affected regardless of their pre-disaster situations. In his classification of strategies, and especially in his last scenario, the role of private ownership is not clear.

According to Oliver-Smith (1996):

Disaster reconstruction is fraught with ambivalence. On the one hand, people whose lives have been disrupted need to re-establish some form of stability

and continuity with the past to re-continue their lives. For some individuals and groups the status quo ante was extremely favorable, and they count on its reconstruction. On the other hand, the disaster may have revealed areas where change is much needed. Consequently, reconstruction entails significant contention over means and goals involving persistence or change (Oliver-Smith, 1996, p313).

Whatever the scenario, the policy and perspective of the state substantially affects the character and process of reconstruction. Thus, reconstruction becomes a political issue since the state as the dominant power that has the monopoly in regulating goods distribution is responsible for shaping the new social arrangements. According to Pelling (2003), in developing countries, the dominant power pre-disaster often applies some degree of using clientelistic linkages to control grassroots where resources are open to being redistributed to support the dominant social groups instead of addressing need. The main tool that is usually used by states in reconstruction is the way that housing is addressed in reconstruction.

### **3.7.2 Reconstruction as Housing**

Housing is essential to the well-being of households. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights supports the right for a basic standard of living including housing in times of lack of livelihood in unforeseen circumstances:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25).

Housing is considered as an asset linked to livelihoods, health, education, security and family stability and is also considered as a source of pride and cultural identity (Barakat, 2003). According to Aysan (1992), “A ‘home’ is always more than a structure; it is a place of security, symbol of status, reflection of social values and expression of aspirations” (1992, p3). Consequently, as mentioned earlier, the destruction of home and neighbourhood and displacement due to natural disaster have great psychological effects on people and damage their ‘sense of belonging’.

One of the most important areas where government can manifest its power is in housing and public building. As Freeman (2004) rightly argues, “governments benefit politically by allocating money to housing development and reconstruction because housing is a highly visible government investment with enormous political appeal” (2004, p432).

According to Aysan (1992), in reconstruction terminology, the use of the term ‘sheltering’ as a verb should be preferred to the use of the word ‘shelter’. Sheltering means a process to support and empower the affected community as opposed to products to be delivered as houses.

The expanded perception of sheltering and housing as processes involving many people and agencies inevitably leads to the need for a broad consideration of the elements that contribute to risk reduction and recovery. These will include the social, cultural, economic, political, ecological and developmental dynamics that constrain the processes of sheltering or housing families (Aysan, 1992, p12).

Twigg (2004) believes the focus of states and international agencies on rebuilding homes so that they are safe or disaster-resistant has little impact on making vulnerable people more secure in the long-term for the following reasons: An emphasis on technically ‘safe’ housing, without certainty that such housing is affordable or culturally acceptable; and large scale programmes are particularly

likely to be technology-driven and introduce new and expensive construction technologies. He continues that although reconstruction programmes can provide jobs for local builders, in many cases the builders and their traditional skills are displaced by imported technologies and labour. Consequently communities do not attain the skills needed to extend, modify and repair the new houses. Where reconstruction does create local jobs; it is not clear how sustainable these new livelihood opportunities are once the programmes have ended.

Another problem in such approaches as Twigg (2004) argues is the focus on houses (physical structures) rather than housing (the arena of social and economic life). Homes are not seen as places of work, learning, communication and relationship building. Houses are built without regard for how - or if - this will improve social and economic status or reduce vulnerability in its widest sense. According to Kelman *et al* (2008), addressing settlement and community issues is as important as providing physical structures.

Twigg (2004) further complains of a tendency for a lack of community participation. Most reconstruction projects claim that they are participatory, but there is usually an element of agency propaganda in this and the extent and nature of such participation is often hotly disputed. Pelling (1998) highlights this disadvantage in many so-called participatory projects. He argues that communities are often involved in participatory projects as labour (self-help) and in maintenance (management) of resources rather in a utilitarian way to improve the efficiency of the projects and reduce transactions costs for the planning agency. This is instead of identifying the problem and project management roles. Such projects lack the empowering nature to view community members as equal partners with professional agency staff. They are instead seen as beneficiaries of external support.

### **3.7.3 Northern NGOs and International Aid Organisations as Outsiders**

Not only are the central decision-makers rarely familiar with the needs and capacities of the local people of the area where the project is implemented, but so too are the international organisations. Not many of them have the capacity to make the effort to gain a comprehensive knowledge about local advantages and disadvantages. According to Wisner (2006), in Tsunami recovery:

Implementing aid agencies, particularly those that are new to an area, or are having to rapidly scale up their interventions, have a tendency to create their own systems for delivery, service and accountability rather than looking to use and enhance existing local systems. In effect, they build a parallel economy. They create a large pool of relatively well paid but temporary jobs. They use their own vehicles and build their own warehouses (Wisner, 2006, p58).

There is a need for different active organisations in reconstruction to work with grassroots to realise the real needs and characteristics of an affected community:

[Community based organization] were deeply rooted in the society and culture of each area, they enabled people to express their real needs and priorities, allowing problems to be correctly defined and responsive mitigation measures to be designed. Following disaster people were able through community based organizations to articulate strategies for recovery and reconstruction which responded to their real needs (Maskrey, 1989, p84).

For this reason, to address the needs of the community, many northern NGOs have moved away from the direct implementation of projects to a 'partnership approach'

with southern NGOs. However, the precise nature and terms of such partnerships often remain unclear (Desai 2008).

Here, the core purposes of NGOs as advocates to conquer marginalisation and unjust distribution of power becomes the matter of notice. The experience of Bam shows that international NGOs sometimes intensify the manifestation of social class structure in their missions. Fowler (2000) believes that such approaches in foreign NGDOs (non-governmental, development organisations) are inevitable:

As implicit or explicit (e.g. Christian, right wing, left wing, liberal or whatever) carriers of Western codes, northern NGDO usually play a cultural-transfer role whether they like it or not. They are who they are with a moral wellspring and value set derived from their domestic context and individual origins. It would be naïve to assume value free NGDO behavior anywhere (2000, p597).

Here the work of Bourdieu on social structure and class can be of assistance. To him, what is often missed in social analysis is the structure of the life-style characteristic of an agent or class of agents, that is, "the unity hidden under the diversity and multiplicity of the set of practices performed in fields governed by different logics and therefore including different forms of realization", and the structure of the symbolic space marked out by the whole set of these structured practices. He believes for a deep analysis of social structure and life-style one must consider the practice-generating principle, i.e. class habitus the internalised form of class condition and of the conditionings it entails.

The different forms of capital, the possession of which defines class membership and the distribution of which determines position in the power relations constituting the field of power and also determines the strategies available for use in these struggles – 'birth', 'fortune', and 'talent' in a past age, now economic capital and educational capital- are simultaneously



instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power, they are unequally powerful in real terms and unequally recognized as legitimate principles of authority or signs of distinction, at different moments and of course, by the different fractions (Pierre Bourdieu, 1986, p316).

According to Fowler (2000), the role of NGDOs should be to foster co-operation and collaborative spirit as the basis of human relations in an increasingly interdependent world:

The essential idea is to draw on but move beyond a too simple three-sector view of society, to a more complex understanding of an NGDO's grounding, principles of operation, roles and embedding in society. This combination is captured in looking at NGDOs in this new era as occupying a Fourth Position. In other words while bonded to civil society they use their value-base as a 'springboard' to interact with state, market and civil society itself- which is far from homogeneous and is not inherently 'civil' or conflict free. They would have the competence to speak different 'sector languages'; engage across divers institutional boundaries and foster inter-organizational linkages...they are an ethics which recognize that personal power relations create and are able to reform inhumane conditions in the world order (Fowler, 2000, p598-9).

### **3.7.4 Local Power Structures**

There are also disadvantages in local communities to address social vulnerabilities. The local power structure will be reflected in local community-based organisations and community governance. According to Pelling (2003), after the Gujarat earthquake the aid and goods provided by international relief agencies, were distributed by local organisations. However, some high-caste-dominated groups took advantage of the situation and captured the resources that had been intended for lower caste victims. According to Mercer (2002):

NGOs must be seen as a constituent part of the culture in which they work, and that hierarchical and authoritarian social structures that encourage dependence and deference will often be replicated in NGOs. In particular the tendency for NGOs to be headed by one charismatic leader can stifle individual staff autonomy and discourage wider staff participation in decision-making processes (which, ironically, is usually what staff are trying to achieve with the NGOs' 'beneficiaries') (Mercer 2002, p13).

### **3.7.5 Creating Social Capital**

The creation and most importantly permanence of social capital cannot be taken for granted merely through the involvement of NGOs. The creation of norms of reciprocity, trust and networks, as the basis for development, has been proved to be one of the hardest tasks. While Putnam argues that social capital is the 'path dependant', created by society over lengthy historical periods, others (for example Tendler 1997) argue that state or civil society action can create social capital, sometimes over relatively short periods (as cited by Hulme and Goods hand, 2000). The task of NGOs then would be to involve people in face-to-face programmes to increase their sense of co-operation and trust in each other. As a result, this fosters the norms of reciprocity in communities while at the same time creating intra-organisational networks with formal organisations; enabling access for people to influence policy which then addresses their concerns.

Bonding, solidarity or social cohesion provides the basis for reciprocity and exchanges within these groups. But when the power and resources of these social groups is limited, bridging or linking social capital with other groups becomes important to access different resources, information and power (Narayan *et al*, 2004, p1184).

Having strong ties with people who suffer from the same lack of resources as oneself may not be very helpful, and can even hinder individual inclusion.

Some excluded actors are characterized by only having access to primary and non-cross-cutting social networks which limit their sphere of action (e.g. poor, low caste or women in some contexts)...socially included actors can usually access both cross-cutting social networks, and through them have the ability to access institutional capital as well- that is develop links with formal organizations such as local government which are providers of essential services and conduits for exercising political voice. Networks of secondary associations with more heterogeneous membership (within which ties may cut across ethnic, caste, class, wealth, religion, location or other characteristics) are thus key to accessing resources and opportunities as well as being capable of complementing the role of the government and even providing a substitute in areas in which government policy is ineffective (Marina Della Giusta, 2008, p138-9).

In a similar argument, Satterthwaite (2002) realises two forms of social capital helpful in urban governance which can be applied to our post-disaster reconstruction agenda: One is built on informal social networks, and the other comes from participating in formal market arrangements, the wider political system and civil society organisation. He believes the most important aspect of social capital for the vulnerable is their capacity to form organisations which can link these two kinds of social capital and make use of community resources and their potential to negotiate resources and support from external agencies; especially the agencies that have control over access to land, infrastructure and services. According to Satterthwaite:

there are also obvious links between the two since the extent to which relations with external agencies prove useful in acquiring land and obtaining infrastructure and services influences the extent to which people organize to negotiate for these (2002, p259).

Pelling (1998) argues for community and external decision-making to link and collaborate, the need for leaders as representatives of the community rises.

Leadership has to be accountable and representative and moreover it should have effective linkages with external organisations. The selection of leadership, if it does not take place with great concern and sensitivity, may result in the formation of a dominant and homogeneous leader group or ‘class’ and undermine participation from an empowerment perspective (Pelling, 1998). The role of leadership in transferring local knowledge to external organisations is substantial. This is through leadership that communities realise what to do to recover, or the external donors become aware of weaknesses and family or material losses as well as personal injuries (Davis, 2006).

Moreover, as Edwards and Hulme (1996) argue, NGOs who wish to remain effective and accountable and to promote their sustainability in the long-term should diversify their funding sources and pursue strategies to raise funds locally. Dependence of the NGOs on donor funding, being northern NGOs or the state, affects their accountability and their relationship with local civil societies and grassroots (Edwards and Hulme, 1996).

According to Clarke (1998), the impact of states on civil society and NGOs is central in defining the role that NGOs can play in national development because it is government which give NGOs the space and the autonomy to organise, network and campaign. The role of local government as the legitimate local organisational forms of governance is substantial in affecting reconstruction policies and mediating the community-state power relations. However, as Pelling (2003, p81) cites from Solway (1994), “the capacity for local or municipal government to contribute to building resiliency is greatly determined by its organizational structure and relationship to national government”. Local governments can institutionalise local participation by bargaining for more municipal and town council authorities. According to Narayan (2004):

Formal government systems are embedded in the local social organizational context. Hence understanding how and when local governments become

inclusive and function effectively is basic service provision and poverty reduction requires understanding the interplay between history, politics and changes in social organization over time (Narayan, 2004, p1179)

Institutionalising local participation in society would leave its effects on the local organisational context and would affect the formal governance structure.

The community with social capital is proactive in collective decision-making and contributes to a speedy recovery. The community is also found to be satisfied with the reconstruction policy, since there has been effective negotiation between community and local governments (Shaw and Goda, 2004, p32).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

Development studies are increasingly involving disaster and risk reduction discourses into their debates. Development should be regarded as a process through which people's physical, social and attitudinal vulnerabilities are reduced. Along with rapid urbanisation process that many countries, especially developing countries, are experiencing, the importance of paying attention to risk reduction factors to decrease the vulnerabilities that rapid urbanisation brings about is becoming prominent.

In doing so, the most important and basic step is understanding vulnerability. Vulnerability is studied through different approaches in development studies. This chapter discussed the following approaches that vulnerability is addressed through: The entitlement or livelihood approach, relating vulnerability to the poverty approach, Pressure and Release model relating vulnerability to resilience, the institutional approach, participatory approach, and relating vulnerability to a sense of belonging.

People with lower access to resources, civil rights, supporting networks and health conditions suffer more from natural disasters due to their higher level of vulnerability. Hence, it is crucial in studying development projects to identify who is the community, how a community is defined by itself and by others and who is marginalised from a community. Community gives our lives moral meaning and a sense of security. In times of disaster, loss of a family's home linked with the loss of a group's cultural space results in alienation of the families subjected to forced displacement and a lasting experience of placelessness. This in turn fragments patterns of social fabric including reciprocal help and voluntary associations. However, there is a discourse that disasters can also institute a new form of governance through informal responses that operate outside of established social frameworks which can address pre-disaster vulnerabilities. To prevent the feeling of alienation and placelessness and to increase the resilience of the affected community, investing in social capital is helpful.

Part of this chapter debated and explored the concept of social capital: The origin of social capital discourses, Putnam's social capital, the dark side of social capital, and the contribution of social capital to development studies. It was also discussed how the development of civil society and NGOs can assist in the creation of desired forms of social capital in a community. In doing so, Habermas' dilemma on the roles and relations of the state and civil society was studied along with existing discourses about the alternatives to state-centred governance. Due to the fact that state centred approaches usually apply a blue-print approach, and are professional and urban, bias results in unsatisfactory outcomes.

On the other hand, it was asserted that for NGOs to create useful social capital they have to invest in their communicative skills to create effective links with grass-root communities regarding the creation of cognitive social capital and diversify their financial resources to gain accountability and independence.

Post-disaster recovery and reconstruction phases, which could be worthy opportunities for the creation of new social links and institutions in favour of encouragement of bottom-up and inclusive urban governance, often fail to achieve this goal. The focus of the main and central reconstruction stake-holders are usually directed to housing. Housing reconstruction projects, however, are often limited to the physical reconstruction of houses, but not to the individual and families needs and expectations of housing. Homes are often built without regard to their effect on the lives and livelihoods of the people who will live in them. Local participation in these approaches is limited to applying the blue-prints that are designed for them by outside engineers and builders.

To make post-disaster recovery period to an opportunity for self-governing practices for the affected community, NGOs can be useful only if they gain success in creating trust among the community and local and national states and have access to efficient financial resources. General use of the term ‘NGO’ might shadow the fact that local and non-local NGOs have weaknesses in creating trustful links with the grass-root community of the local or national states. Foreign NGOs are often alien with the cultural values of the affected community which can be an obstacle to creating trust. Local NGOs are a part of the culture in which they work, and the hierarchical and authoritarian social structures that encourage dependence and deference will often be replicated in NGOs. In the creation of social capital in development projects and especially post-disaster reconstruction periods, NGOs, along with getting embedded and accepted in the community, have the task of creating vertical links among formal and informal bodies to increase capacity and reduce vulnerabilities.

## Chapter 4

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# Institutional Context of Disaster Management in Iran

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background for the study of reconstruction policy and implementation in Iran. It presents the broad context necessary for understanding the policies for reconstruction and their results.

To understand the reconstruction process, an understanding of the governing system is needed. In this regard this chapter provides an introduction to the structure of the state and the key policy makers and implementers in national, provincial and local levels. The situation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as a part of the Third Sector will be presented.



Another subject of this chapter is the government policies on urbanisation, housing and land after the revolution of 1979. Land and housing are crucial factors in reconstruction. This chapter will discuss how these policies affected the urbanisation process in post-revolutionary Iran. The policies are a key tool for analysing the post-earthquake reconstruction process.

Following these backgrounds, the disaster management system in Iran will be discussed followed by the experiences of reconstruction in the country. To make the subject clearer, Iran's reconstruction context is divided into two sections: reconstruction of war-affected areas and reconstruction of natural disaster affected areas in Iran.

## **4.2 Earthquake-Prone Iran**

Iran is a country with an area of 1,648,000 square kilometres located in south-west Asia. It has more than seventy million people who are mostly young: the population of Iran in 2007 was 71,830,091 (Iran National Statistics centre) about twice the number of the population of 1979 (about 36 million, *ibid*). The population is mainly urban with 68.46 percent living in towns and cities in 2006 and 31.54 percent residing in rural areas (National Statistics Center).

Being part of the Alp-Himalaya belt, Iran is the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. According to Iran's report for Hyogo Framework for Action (2005), more than 180,000 people were killed by earthquakes during the last 90 years. This can be explained by rapid urbanisation which increases the vulnerability to earthquake and put more people at risk. In 1956 there were 199 cities in Iran which increased to 373 cities in 1976 (twenty years later), 612 cities in 1996, and 1016 in 2006 (sixty six percent growth in the number of the cities since 1996) (National Statistics Centre of Iran). Amani (2001) identifies four factors responsible for this rapid increase in the number of urban population in Iran: increase in the number of births and decrease in the number of deaths in cities, migration from towns and villages to cities, expansion

of cities and the merge of neighbouring settlement areas into the cities, and classifying large towns as cities due to the increase in the number of their inhabitants.

In terms of reconstruction, in addition to post-earthquake reconstruction experiences, Iran has needed extensive reconstruction after war. War between Iran and Iraq broke out on 22 September 1980 when the Iraqi army invaded a large area of the west and south-west Iran. The war lasted eight years before the ceasefire in 1988. According to official information issued by the Iranian government, the total direct economic loss on the Iranian side during the eight-year war was US\$ 117 billion. The total number of residential units destroyed in 4, 873 villages in the five provinces affected by the war totalled 202,356 (Chamran, 1986).

### **4.3 The Structure of State in Iran after the Revolution of 1979**

The Islamic structure of the government was a consequence of people's vote for an Islamic Republic system on 3rd April 1979. Article three of the Islamic Republic of Iran states: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has duty of directing all its resources to the goals of ruling the nation according to the Islamic Law." According to the constitution, *faqih* as the Supreme Leader of the country has the supreme power to control the system:

"In keeping with the principles of governance and the permanent necessity of leadership, the Constitution provides for the establishment of leadership by *faqih* (ruler) possessing the necessary qualifications and recognized as leader by the people. This is in accordance with the saying 'the conduct of affairs is to be in the hands of those who are learned concerning God and are trustworthy guardians of that which He has permitted and that which He has forbidden'. Such leadership will prevent any deviation by the various organs

of government from their essential Islamic duties.” (Constitution: Introduction, 1979, p20-21).

Along with highlighting the role of *faqih* in governing the system, the Constitution emphasises the crucial role of people as main administrators of the Islamic Republic:

“In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the affairs of the country must be administrated on the basis of public opinion expressed by means of elections, including the election of the President of the Republic, the representatives of the National Consultative Assembly (the Parliament), and the members of Councils, or by means of referenda in matters specified in other articles of this Constitution.” (Article 6).

*Faqih* and the people govern the country together through three political institutions: the Legislature (consisting of elected parliamentarians), the Executive (a directly elected president and 21 executive ministries), and the Judiciary (its head is appointed directly by *faqih*).

Despite the focus of the new Constitution following the revolution of 1979 on the role of people in the governance, post-revolutionary Iran experienced a highly centralised governing system. Tajbakhsh (2003) identifies three factors influential in this regard: first the damage to the economy due to the flight of key investors and personnel, which led the new government to nationalise many industries and sectors of the economy. Second, the eight-year war with Iraq left no option for the government but to centralise military and administrative functions to safeguard the new state. Third, the Islamic system required ideological support which should be created in all spheres of society and needed government’s input into all social and economic aspects of the country.

## 4.4 Urban Governance in Iran

The country is governed in three levels: national, regional and local. At the regional level Iran is divided into thirty one provinces governed by a provincial governor appointed by the Minister of Interior. Each province is divided into sub-provinces which are governed by the governor also appointed by the Ministry of Interior. In 2003 the country had about 900 cities.

Iran's population distribution is rapidly urbanising. A study by Azkia *et al* (2005) shows that about 68 percent of the population of Iran live in about nine hundred Iranian cities. Azkia *et al* (2005) believes the rapid growth of urbanisation in Iran is due to the large governmental investment in cities and especially in Tehran which attracts many people from rural areas to cities looking for job opportunities and better public services like better education for their children. Madanipour (1998) states this rapid urbanisation is outpacing the capacity of the infrastructure of the cities resulting in: pollution, shortage of water, shortage of green space, inefficient housing and inadequate city services are some problems. The main organisations responsible for solving these problems are city councils and municipalities.

Until the end of the twentieth century urban management in Iran was highly centralised: urban governance was the duty of the municipality and the mayor was chosen by the representative of the central government of the province. In 1999 it changed from a top-down system towards a more democratic approach. Since 1999 city councils were shaped by the municipality, whose members were elected by local residents and the mayor would be chosen by the elected city council. Studies by Azkia *et al* (2005) show that despite the creation of city councils and a democratic approach to urban governance, public participation in urban governance has decreased: in the first elections for city council in 1999, sixty five per cent of people, who were eligible to vote, voted; but in 2002 (one year before the Bam earthquake) this number decreased to fifty per cent.

Besides electing the mayor (whom should be approved by the Ministry of Interior), city councils have the responsibility to monitor and co-operate with the mayor's activities; approve laws presented by the mayor's office, which should be in accordance with the framework of the Ministry of Interior; and approve the mayor's annual budget (Islamic city council of Tehran official website). They are also responsible for adequately administering and providing municipal services.

Urban municipal services in Iran can be classified into four main categories (Tajbakhsh, 2003):

1. Public health, including street cleaning, collecting, transporting and disposing of solid waste (garbage), slaughterhouses
2. Recreational, including parks
3. Public safety, including fire stations
4. Local transportation, including buses and taxis

It should be noted that municipalities (mayors and councils) should not be considered as local governments, but in practice they are. Legally, they are non-governmental public organisations: financially, according to the Municipal Fiscal Self-Sufficiency Act passed in 1988, municipalities are self-sufficient. However, all of their decisions and elections should be approved by the Ministry of Interior and their activities are limited to minor urban management. Neither the councils nor the mayors have legal authority to initiate or engage in urban development planning. Their area of action is restricted to implementing the urban master plans designed by the central Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (Islamic city council of Tehran official website).

#### **4.4.1. Local Government Powers:**

Despite their formal distinction, city councils have limited power in influencing the governance of cities. According to Article 7 of the Iranian Constitution, these local

councils together with Parliament are decision-making and administrative organs of the state. However, as Azkia *et al* (2005) argue, city councils in practice have only a minor role in urban governance. Azkia *et al* believe one of the reasons is their budget deficit. City councils rely on local taxes for their expenses, but in Iran, due to the focus and access of the central government to oil income rather than on taxes, taxpaying is not applied orderly and correctly (Azkia *et al*, 2005). This limits city councils' ability to access sufficient income to run their projects. Hence their legitimacy for urban governance would be put at risk. Other reasons that Azkia *et al* (2005) mention are the absence of a culture of co-operation and participation and a lack of active civil organisations. Consequently, members of the councils spend significant time arguing with each other and disputing who is right, without applying themselves to actual governance.

Amirahmadi (1996) has also mentioned this problem in his studies on recovery in post-war cities of Iran. According to him, inaugurations of city councils were encouraged in order to institutionalise local participation. However, due to the lack of autonomous non-governmental organisations to empower grass-root input, the national government's efforts to institutionalise participation through city councils became a top-down management strategy wherein the central authority makes the important decisions.

Municipal revenues, according to Tajbakhsh (2003) have nine sources (Table 4.1). As the table shows, the main source of municipalities' income is through levies on buildings and land followed by sale of services, user charges and building permits. Governmental financial support through the Ministry of Interior is very small (one percent of the budget). This means the most beneficial income resource for municipalities to finance their staff and small city projects was through private construction sector and building permits. The municipalities increased their income through selling more building permits than the city's land-use plan allows. Coupled with the high rate of urbanisation, cities and their urban populations became increasingly vulnerability to earthquakes.

**Table 4.1: Municipal revenue/ Average of all cities in Iran** (Source: Ministry of Interior as cited by Tajbakhsh, 2003)

	Revenue	All cities average of total revenue 1992-2000 (%)
1.	Levies on building and land	45%
2.	Income from sale of services and user charges	17%
3.	Levies on building permits	14%
4.	Income from municipal establishments from fines and penalties	11%
5.	Grants, gifts, loans, balance from previous years	5%
6.	Levies on communication and transportation	4%
7.	Levies and taxes collected locally	2%
8.	Income from rent or sale of municipal properties	1%
9.	Allocations from the Ministry of Interior	1%

Since the presidential election of Khatami in 1997, some steps were made to increase people's participation in Iran's municipal governing system including: activating local councils and NGOs. The formation of NGOs is the subject of the following section.

## 4.5 NGOs in Iran

Iranian NGOs can be classified into two groups: Modern NGOs and traditional community-based organisations (Tahmasbi, 2002). In 1999 there were four thousand registered NGOs and many more that were not registered (Islamic Republic of Iran Population Council Information Bank, as cited by Rostami-Povey, 2004, p257).

Many modern NGOs were established by government members (Rostami-Povey, 2004). Among NGOs founded by government members some were established to activate civil society participation in line with President Khatami's democratic policies in late 1990s (Rostami-Povey, 2004). In fact, these NGOs, with the support they had from government acted as a catalyst in opening up the third sector and advocating social issues (Tahmasbi, 2002). Modern NGOs' can be categorised broadly as:

- Women's NGOs
- Children and youth NGOs
- Environmental NGOs
- Health NGOs
- Cultural NGOs
- Science and Technology NGOs
- A limited number of Human Right NGOs

The core of President Khatami's policy was encouraging civil society. He supported freedom of speech through publications. According to the studies of Kamrava (2001), in 2001, nearly one thousand newspapers, magazines and journals were being published. In line with his liberal policies, some modern NGOs were supported by the government policies more than others, namely women, youth and environmental NGOs (Tahmasbi, 2002).



The studies of Malek Mohamadi and Mirbod (2005) reveal three obstacles that restrict NGOs in Iran: registration, funding, and management. Various government entities are involved in the NGO registration process, which often leads to problems. According to Tahmasbi (2002) the exact number of NGOs in Iran is not available but by 2002 they were estimated to number around 10,000-12,000 (about 5,000 of them are CBOs) – many of which were not registered. In terms of funding, modern NGOs in Iran are financed by their members, their founders, their boards, public aid and at the time of Khatami's presidency limited but increasing contributions from the government (Tahmasbi, 2002). However, their financial requirements are usually not covered sufficiently and tax laws lack clear guidelines pertaining to NGO tax (Malek Mohamadi and Moniri, 2005). Regarding NGO management, many modern NGOs who lack experience, are unfamiliar with administrative issues which result in lack of transparency and accountability (Tahmasbi, 2002). Most NGOs prefer to rely just on a few key members for decision making and funding (Malek Mohamadi and Moniri, 2005).

A 2002 study conducted by the Center of Empowering Civil Society Organizations in Iran on 405 NGOs, revealed that the average age of an NGO was seven years with thirty two percent registered between 1990-1997 and 68 percent established after 1997. Approximately one third of the NGOs formed after 1997 had not been registered by that time (ibid).

In terms of Traditional CBOs, civil society-friendly policies helped them move away from a traditional approach of giving money to deprived and social vulnerable groups which is criticised for creating dependency toward a more modern system of management and for conducting research and analysis to enable implementation of their own philanthropic services (Tahmasbi, 2002). Their activities vary from providing education, housing and health service for deprived households to consultation and assistance to female-headed households (Tahmasbi, 2002). Due to their long term experience and religious and cultural roots, these traditional CBOs were more successful in communicating with the public than modern NGOs.

A study by Tajbakhsh *et al* (2003) about the history of these different types of NGOs in Iran, determined that new forms of Traditional NGOs were initially shaped in the 1910s with the creation of primary links with the modern West. In 1911 the Iranian Government (which was The Qajar at that time) sent the first group of Iranian students to Europe for further education. Gradually with the return of these students, new views entered the social structure of Iran and brought with itself new institutions. One of these institutions was new forms of charity organisations. One such organisation was the *Sardar Mokaram* School which was started with funds from a few wealthy individuals for deprived children but later changed to a new form of finance and management through the creation of an organisation in which different persons could take part and contribute. After the Constitutional Revolution of Iran, which occurred between 1905 and 1907, women started to take part in non-governmental organisations and gradually their participation expanded. In 1945 the "Institution for Child Fostering" became one of the first modern non-governmental organisations to be started by a group of women. Contemporary Iranian NGOs and especially those that active in Bam are mostly the offspring of this kind of NGO.

## **4.6 Disaster Management system in Iran**

After the disastrous earthquake of Manjil in 1990, disaster management in Iran took a new form. A new law was passed in 1991 which mandated the Ministry of Interior as the main responsible organisation for disaster management through two new established sectors: The Bureau for Research and Co-ordination of Safety and Reconstruction Affairs (BRCSR) and Natural Disaster Headquarter (NDH). BRCSR research into safety measures; formulation of preparedness and mitigation plans; disaster information collection, analysis and dissemination; provision of coordination services for relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities; monitoring activities including coordination of budget forecasting; and disbursement and provision of logistical and procurement support service for provinces (Iran's report for Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005). NDH in turn, is a coordinator between different organisations. In normal times it coordinates research activities of different

institutions and in times of disaster it has the responsibility of coordinating the relief and reconstruction operations of all respected agencies. The organs that NDH supervise after a disaster are: Red Crescent of Iran and Armed forces in the rescue and relief phase and Housing Foundation of Iran and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in the reconstruction phase (Ghafoury-Ashtiani, 1999).

Seven ministries and the following governmental organisations are directly concerned with disaster research and management: Army of Islamic Republic of Iran, Planning and Budget Organization<sup>1</sup> (the supreme approving body for all public sector major development plans, programmes and projects), National Welfare Organization, Meteorological Organization, Islamic Republic Broadcasting Organization, Geography Institute of University of Tehran, Disciplinary Forces and Building and Housing Research Center. Nevertheless, other institutions that are represented as nongovernmental are not quite independent from the state. Beside Earthquake Committee of National research Council, Natural Disaster Prevention Center and International Institute for Seismology Earthquake, which are organisations that research technical aspects of disaster.

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<sup>1</sup> This organisation was eliminated in 2007, two sections were created in the president's Office to do the former Planning and Budget Organization's responsibilities

**Table 4.2: all governments/para-government organisations involved in disaster management and their respective activities. (Source: Bahrainy, 2003, p149 (author's interpretation))**

Organisations	Education	Research	Research and relief	Reconstruction	Codes and criteria	Prevention	Prediction	Financing	Information dissemination	Damage assessment	Coordination	Early warning	Supervision
Army of IRI													
Housing Foundation													
Fire department													
National Welfare Organisation													
Meteorological Organisation													
Municipalities													
IR Broadcasting Org.													
Emam Khomeini Relief Foundation													
Earthquake Com. Of National research Council													
Building and housing research centre													
Natural disaster Prevention centre													
International Institute for seismology earthquake													
Geography institute, Uni. of Tehran													
Disciplinary Forces													
Mobilisation Forces													
Ministry of Interior													
The Red Crescent Society of Iran													
Ministry of Health													
Ministry of Foreign Affairs													
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development													
Ministry of Energy													
Ministry of Agriculture													
Ministry of Roads and Transportation													

Housing Foundation, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, was established to provide housing for under-privileged and families of martyrs in the early years after the revolution. Together with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Foundation is responsible for approval and implementation of spatial plans, housing projects and building codes including earthquake mandatory codes (Iran's report for Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005). Reconstruction of housing is carried out by the Housing Foundation in collaboration and with participation of the owners, people's assistance, support of banks and free technical and engineering services from the government (Housing Foundation Guidance Book).

Emam Khomeini Relief Foundation is a charity organisation inaugurated by Imam Khomeini's call for supporting deprived households in years following the revolution. The Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the first of its kind in the region, is by far the most important nongovernmental partner in disaster management in Iran (Iran's report for Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005).

In terms of municipalities, as stated earlier, despite the fact that legally they are nongovernmental organisations, in practice they are an implementing arm of the Ministry of Interior.

## **4.7 Reconstruction**

Iran has experience in both post-war and post-earthquake reconstructions.

### **4.7.1 Post-war reconstruction**

Immediately after the end of Islamic Revolution in 1979, the war between Iran and Iraq started in 1980 which lasted for eight years. After two years of war and after the government overcame the shock of Iraqi attacks and found enough power to manage the war, the reconstruction of war affected cities started (Motawef, 1996).

Since it was still early years of the new regime, the ideas of revolution and the main tools for policy making were still fresh. The new regime slogans were: support the poor, independence from foreign aid, and people's participation (Motawef, 1996).

“Take the reconstruction in the same way as the war and strive to solve its problems with the assistance of the people” (Imam Khomeini, 1982).

Reconstruction in those days had broader meaning for the revolutionary people. The idea of reconstruction of the country was the main subject of after the revolution even before the war started. Reconstruction was referred to as “the restoration of an Islamic polity which had been largely and deliberately destroyed by the previous ‘westernising’ regime of the Shah” (Motawef, 1996, p 120).

In the reconstruction of war damaged areas three approaches were of main concern: first, keeping the *status quo* approach – to rebuild the damaged area the way they were before; second, the pro-poor approach which was the cornerstone of the government's policies; and third, the development approach in which the reconstruction was considered as an opportunity to restore Islamic identity in damaged cities (Zargar 1989, Motawef 1996).

“The major debates were around defining the objective of reconstruction. Some of those involved defined reconstruction as regeneration. By this definition, in each village efforts should be made to help the victims to resettle and therefore no change in the settlement or life style were considered. This view was criticised by others as it appears in many post-disaster situations. The other groups claimed that if we look to the previous situation of these villages, in fact we cannot see anything worthwhile to reconstruct” (Zargar, 1988, p29).

In practice, however, no coherent programme was applied. Operations occurred rapidly and without clear planning. As the studies of Motawef (1996) reveal,

“...the main policy was in effect simply to get the reconstruction operation started in the confidence that, although problems would undoubtedly occur, solutions would certainly be found” (Motawef, 1996, p128-129).

The reconstruction was carried out by the central government with the assistance of numerous volunteers in response to the government's call for manpower and public donations. In terms of people's participation, Zargar (as cited by El Masri 1992) classifies reconstruction policies into three categories:

- Participatory policy: people are involved in the decision making, design and construction,
- Non-participatory policy: the reconstruction project was designed by outsiders. At the time of rebuilding, local people have been either living in other areas because of displacement or were able to make only a minor contribution to construction,
- Semi-participatory policy: people have little opportunity to influence the decision making and the design process and their role is limited to construction of individual dwellings,

Some national NGOs were also helpful in reconstruction. For the reconstruction of rural areas two revolutionary NGOs mobilised: Housing Foundation (which cannot be considered entirely as a "non"-governmental organisation) and the Construction *Jihad* which was another organisation inaugurated by volunteers immediately after the revolution to develop rural and deprived areas through reviving the rural production system other related activities (Motawef, 1996).

In urban areas, some NGOs were shaped in mosques and religious centres for the purpose of reconstruction. These NGOs were known as Assistant Organisations and each took responsibility for a particular town or city (Motawef, 1996). Nevertheless, these Assistant Organisations lacked coordination and experience in reconstruction

and consequently they could not play an influential role in reconstruction. Hence they left the affected areas in 1984 while the reconstruction was still under process.

In 1985 two factors forced the government to halt the reconstruction. First, the government decided to focus on finishing the protracted war to avoid wasting money on reconstruction that may only be temporary and in areas where residents had left and would not return to their houses until after the war. Second, a collapse in oil prices in the mid 1980s, which at that time covered ninety to ninety five percent of the government's annual budget, resulted in an economic crisis for the Iran government (Amirahmadi, 1990). The government cut reconstruction funds to decrease expenditures.

After the end of the war in 1988, a new era started in Iran which influenced reconstruction. One year after the end of the war Imam Khomeini passed away and the structure of power changed. Hashemi Rafsanjani became president in 1989. During his presidency, economic liberalisation attracted foreign investment and increased private sector activity. The first National Five-year Development Plan since the revolution was published by the government with a focus on reconstruction of the war damaged cities. The plan required international loans totalling US\$ 30-40 billion to finance the reconstruction and development. The funds were mainly invested in industrial projects (Amirahmadi, 1990). NGOs have not yet become professional and experienced enough to make a strong appearance in the governance of reconstruction (Motawef, 1996).

#### **4.7.1.1 Some the Examples of Post-war Reconstruction:**

In the reconstruction of Khuzastan the use that villages would get from schools, mosques and other public infrastructure were overestimated. Zargar (1989) relates this to the lack of participation of local community based organisations. The investment in unnecessary infrastructure was a waste of money and over time has



resulted in the buildings falling in to disrepair since local communities are unable to afford the cost of maintenance.

Another example is the reconstruction of Farsia. As Pour (1988) has documented, the reconstruction of Farsia was conducted by planners unfamiliar with the area and without consultation of the local people. This led to a loss of sense of place and an unfamiliarity of the new space with its residents. Nevertheless, over time residents started to change the village in their favour. Minor changes included building required facilities like ovens and sheds, and a major change was the reforming of the functioning of the structure of the city: the narrow pedestrian ways and the square left unused and the cattle rout becoming a vivid centre for the cluster of houses around them because the daily and economic life of Farsia revolved around animals and livestock. This example shows where plans are not designed based on the needs and culture of the area, people change their surroundings in their favour and the reconstruction project results in waste of the budget and time.

The case of Howeizeh is noteworthy. Before the war, Howeizeh had a population of about 6,000 and functioned as an urban centre for the surrounding rural population. During the war, the town was completely levelled by Iraqi troops before its liberation in May 1982. Howeizeh was rebuilt as a monument of war in a different location from the previous city and ten times larger than its original size. The new city had wide streets and many extravagant public buildings. No consultation took place either with local residents or local authorities (Motawef, 1996). Landownership was totally ignored and cultural and social structure of the area was not considered (ibid). Fourteen years after the town's liberation, landownership problems had not been solved and people were still taking cases to court. New houses were bigger in number but smaller in size than the pre-war ones and the large open spaces did not suit the hot weather of the region. All households now live in similar small houses without consideration of their pre-war houses' prices (ibid).

Khoramshahr was another “show case” that can be considered as a failure in reconstruction. Khoramshahr was an important city in the south west of Iran that was soon occupied by Iraqi troops at the start of the war and the port was destroyed leading to decimation of the city’s economic life. Its liberalisation has become one of the greatest events in the history of the Iran-Iraq war. Subsequently its reconstruction gained nationwide interest. Reconstruction was regarded simply as building houses and no attention was paid either to the community’s basic needs or the facilities or infrastructure network of the site (Motawef, 1996). The result was that only deprived people who had no alternative place to go and were unable to access resources agreed to move to this site (ibid). The city lost its core residents, identity and life.

Due to the absence of grass-root inputs, the hope that residents of war afflicted areas would be involved in the rebuilding process was far from reality, except in the case of private housing reconstruction (Amirahmadi, 1996). A representative of the Housing Foundation was appointed to supervise the rebuilding of houses, which were designed for the people but not by them. The government provided the architectural design, construction materials and technical supervision for reconstruction of houses. Community members only became involved in the process through providing the human resources necessary for economic efficiency (Amirahmadi, 1996).

El Mesri (1992) summarised the shortcomings of the housing reconstruction in the war affected cities as follows:

1. Emphasis on speed and quantification sometimes led to rebuilding settlements alien to the people. In some cases reconstruction started even before identifying practical and effective means to encourage the displaced people to return to their original settlement.
2. Standardised building materials were produced and delivered to sites by the government through different organisations. While this facilitated quick and efficient

construction, it neglected the resources and skills available at the regional and local levels which ought to have been developed. In addition, this standardisation contributed to a lack of local characteristics in the cities.

3. In most situations the community was not consulted in major decision makings.

## **4.7.2 Post-earthquake Reconstruction**

### **4.7.2.1 Buyinzahra 1962**

On September 1962, at about 19:20, an earthquake occurred in Buyin-Zahra, a rural area in northern Iran which killed 12,225, injured 2,776 people and damaged 21,310 houses beyond repair. It caused damage to 324 villages with a total population of 199,500. 91 villages were totally destroyed. The main reasons for such a catastrophe were poor quality of building material, heavy roofs and unstable buildings (Ambraseys, 1963).

The city of Buyin Zahra, as Zareh describes (2001), was reconstructed by the Shah's (pre-revolution) government of Iran one year after the earthquake through a highly centralised approach. Despite the catastrophic experience of 1962, new mitigation factors were not applied in the reconstruction. Forty years after the Buyin-Zahra earthquake of 1962, another big earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale, occurred on 22 June 2002 that killed 500 people and made more than 50,000 people homeless (Zareh, 2003). This implies that in the reconstruction following the earthquake of 1962 houses were not built resistant to the earthquake, this could be due to the lack of inserting resistant building factors in the reconstruction plan or lack of proper monitoring in applying the resistant factors.

#### **4.7.2.2 Tabas 1978**

The catastrophic earthquake of Tabas occurred on 16th September 1978: killing 20,000 people and severely damaging 90 villages and the town of Tabas. According to Baker *et al* (2003), the earthquake killed eighty five percent of the population of the town Tabas and the high number of deaths was mostly due to the poor structure of buildings.

The reconstruction process of Tabas demonstrated both some positive outcomes and negative impacts. The reconstruction benefited from the experiences of past earthquakes in Iran plus the fact that the earthquake happened during the revolution, when people were optimistic to create a new and more effective form of governance. Many volunteer groups entered the area to build houses for the affected people and especially the poor. Houses were largely built on adjacent plots next to the ruins of the destroyed houses using earthquake resistant standards (Ghafoury-Ashtiany, 1999).

However, some unexpected consequences emerged after the reconstruction. For example the new houses were not suitable for the taste and culture of the rural life style of villages (Ghafoury-Ashtiany, 1999). As a consequence, people used them as storage or animal sheds and then repaired their damaged houses themselves to use as their living spaces. However, such examples were not widespread.

Nevertheless, according to Ghafoury-Ashtiany (1999), the reconstruction of Tabas, which lasted four and a half years, was not a disappointing experience. The rebuilt houses were safer and people kept the ruins as a memory for prevention.

#### **4.7.2.3 Manjil 1990**

The experiences of post-war reconstruction helped planners and authorities apply the lessons learnt to post-earthquake reconstruction. The most notable example and one

which is widely considered as the turning point of reconstruction and natural disaster management in Iran, is the reconstruction of Manjil after the earthquake of 1990.

On 21st June 1990, an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale struck northwest Iran, killing more than 40,000 people and leaving nearly 500,000 homeless. Most of those severely affected were rural residents; over eighty percent were living in more than 700 villages.

The main organisation implementing the reconstruction was the Housing Foundation (HF). Based on its experiences of reconstruction in war damaged areas, HF conducted the reconstruction of Manjil with extensive participation of local people (Motawef, 1996). Local people and communities were involved in all stages of reconstruction including decision-making; and the state acted as the sponsor of the needs as decided by the people themselves. During reconstruction many of these villages were merged together.

Ten years after the earthquake a study of the host community and the in-migrated (guest) community in one of the villages, which had been formed through the merging of two other villages, was conducted by Asgary (2006). The study revealed that the economic situation and quality of life of the relocated community had deteriorated significantly when compared with the host community. The main economic activities of the region before the earthquake were farming, horticulture (olive trees), livestock and honey production. Due to relocation, the guest communities had lost their land rights. Though the resettlement policy provided them with land for housing, there was no agricultural land provided in the new area. Due to the distance of their agricultural lands from their new village, ninety six percent of the land owned by the guest community was left unattended. In accordance with the livelihood regeneration policy of the government after, olive production was supported financially by the government. But as the study shows, while average ownership of olive trees among the host community increased, their guest counterparts faced significant decrease in ownership of olive trees (from an

average of 57 trees to 17). The same trend was found with livestock ownership as new houses were built without adequate consideration of animal husbandry requirements. Nevertheless honey production, which does not require land or labour, increased – especially among guest communities.

The change the guest community's lifestyle was not merely due to their lack of agriculture land. Despite government investments in creating livelihoods for disaster affected communities, the displaced communities did not benefit from these policies as much as host communities. The first generation of the displaced population did not have enough skills to gain employment (since most of these investments occurred in the service sector) and the second generation did not have an opportunity to acquire new jobs due to the socio-political dominance of the host community (lack of social capital). Due to the deterioration of the financial situation of households, more family members had to seek employment including women in both guest and host communities. However, while the women of host communities secured jobs in governmental and office posts, the women of guest communities largely engaged in daily paid jobs, which were mostly agricultural based on nearby large farms.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter studied how Iran has managed reconstruction. It was discussed that the highly centralised governing system, has led to many negative consequences in terms of urbanisation and reconstruction.

The eight-year war with Iraq exacerbated the situation. The war not only postponed the development process of the country, but legitimised and prolonged a highly centralised government. After the war liberalisation policies emerged across the country: first through economic liberalisation in Hashemi Rafsanjani presidential period and then through political liberalisation in President Khatami's eight year presidential era.

Due to these relatively recent changes, real practice of people's participation is still in its early stages. City councils were activated in 1999 and NGOs in their modern form came to practice no earlier than 1997. At the time of Bam's earthquake in 2003, these institutions were young and lacked sufficient knowledge and experience in their functions.

The above examples of reconstruction reveal this process of evolution of the governing system. The early practices of reconstruction of war affected areas were highly centralised and lacked adequate planning and management; leading to negative outcomes. Over time as lessons were learned during post-war reconstruction, reconstruction policies became more participatory with more positive outcomes. The turning point in this regard was the reconstruction of post-earthquake Manjil in 1990. The first large-scale reconstruction that occurred after the formal establishment of participatory institutions of city councils and NGOs is the reconstruction of post-earthquake Bam in 2003.

## Chapter 5

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# Bam, Vulnerability and the Earthquake

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to create an image of Bam and its reconstruction process. It first describes the evolution of Bam through history and then creates an image of the current city of Bam. Then the chapter makes a twist towards the post-earthquake Bam and bends more towards the designed policies and schemes of reconstruction. It continues with introducing the stakeholders of reconstruction namely: NGOs, international organisations, local government, the Emam Khomeini Relief foundation and the State Welfare Organisation.



## 5.2 Bam through History

Bam is a city of historical importance. It was situated on the path of the Silk Road. The city had trade importance since it was the main producer of fine silk and dates. On the other hand, Bam being the neighbour of Sistan, made it the gateway to India. This strategic position filled Bam's history with numerous wars between different power-seekers. Once in a while, a new ruler from a new background (such as Afghan, Baluch, Mongol or Arab) and often non-local, claimed authority, possessed the lands, and imposed high taxes and cruelty upon the residents (Bastani Parizi, 1984).

The Historic *Arge Bam* (Citadel of Bam) is a remnant of these ancient days of Bam. The city was constituted of a Citadel (political centre), four great mosques (since the Islamic Era), bazaars (economic centre) and residential districts all surrounded by walls and four gates. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the Silk Road lost its importance and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the trade importance of Bam gave way to the Persian Gulf ports (Bastani Parizi, 1984). During this time, the city continued to expand even though the economic function declined. The city expanded over the walls and new districts and bazaars inaugurated outside the border walls (Bastani Parizi, 1984).

## 5.3 Resource dependency and structure of power

Being in command of water as the core capital for production in an arid area like Bam could be regarded as a major tool to impose power over residents by rulers. The need for irrigation meant that the authority of power holders in Bam was immense; water scarcity in the region was a main factor in intensifying the social tension in Bam. Bam is situated in a highly arid area: among desert. The mean rainfall in the high season in Bam in forty seven years (1957-2004), according to the National Statistics Centre of Iran, was eleven millimetres. The prosperity of the agriculture sector (as the main sector of Bam) was (and still is) due to the *qanāt* system (a type

of underground irrigation canal between an aquifer on the piedmont to an arid plain). However, maintenance of *qanāts* was a costly process. This resulted in a social-class system: *Khān-Rayāt* in which *Khān* was regarded as the lord of the area who owned the lands and *Rayāt* were landless inhabitants working on *Khān*'s land for their livelihood. Costly irrigation systems were a great obstacle for simple residents and resulted in them not being able to benefit from private landownership for farming<sup>1</sup>.

The landownership system in Iran was another means of despotism and a way of imposing a patronage system (Shaugannik, 1985). *Iqta* was the main form of land privilege until the nineteenth century (ibid). According to that system, land would be granted conditionally to civil and military servants as long as the will of the ruler remained. Since the possession of land was temporary and did not provide a permanent profit, the *iqta* holders tried to squeeze all that they could from the peasants in the shortest time possible. Small landowners asked for protection from the stronger ones in order to secure land by paying a special due to the 'patron' (ibid). Another form of landownership since the Islamic Era of Iran was *waqf* in which the land could be an endowment for religious or charitable purposes. Though the purpose behind it was public benefit, it was often used to corrupt the administrative organs (Shaugannik, 1985).

In Bam, the landownership system was the same; private ownership shaped through social structures where the highest levels were rulers and clergy. Local rulers appointed by the Shah titled thousands acres of land as their own private possession (Vaziri, 1997). Along with it was the landownership of Prophet Muhammad's descendants (*Sādāt*) who have resided in Bam for more than four hundred years and were provided with acres of land to run their livelihood (ibid).

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<sup>1</sup>The irrigation system was that costly that even after land reform policies in 1960s (which was designed to reduce poverty and give land to small farmers through forcing the Khans to sell or rent their lands to small farmers) did not work and small farmers, not being able to pay irrigation costs, sold the lands and returned to Khan's lands in order to work for them on daily wage bases (Zande-Razavi, 2005).

The modern political structure (since the inauguration of parliament in 1905) was to a great extent shaped by *Khan-Rayat* pattern. According to Bāstani-Pārizi (1984), between 1941 and 1961, fifty seven percent of national parliamentary representatives were among the *Khāns*. By the inauguration of the Islamic Republic in 1979, Parliament had run twenty four terms of which in sixteen terms, the representatives of Bam were among the previous *Khāns* (Bāstani-Rād, 2007, p55). Since the *Khans* had better access to material resources they could benefit from a good education that increased their capability for political responsibilities. Many of these representatives were not even residents of Bam (some of them had never been to Bam) but simply owned lands there (Bāstani-Rād, 2007). Worth noting is that the *Khāns* competed with each other to gain the chair in Parliament; the class tension was not only between the *Khāns* and the *Rayat*, but also among the *Khāns* themselves. The geographical distance between the *Khans* from Bam, and the virtual distance from normal residents and the *Rayats*, along with their temptation to keep the political chair rather than empower local people, resulted in local people being unconnected and Bamis unaware of their rights.

## **5.4 Landownership and entitlement**

The undergoing political reforms since the inauguration of parliament (1905) did not cover this social gap. Most of the Bamis remained vulnerable in terms of land and property ownership. As the studies of Ekhlaspour (2008) in 1956 reveal, fifty percent of the population of Bam were living in houses not belonging to them (these are not the same as renters) and twenty percent of the inhabitants were renters. Eighty percent of residents lived in mud-built houses (*kheshti*), ten percent in mud-brick houses and only about one percent in total brick-made houses. One of the common types of houses in this period was shared houses *Khāns* built to shelter temporary farmers (Ekhlaspour, 2008). This shows the vulnerability of residents in terms of their lack of entitlement or bargaining power.

Despite the changes that the Pahlavi regime made in the 1960s as “social reforms” (such as to the national dress code, the national language, land reforms and modern schools) and regional plans like the Marshal Plan and the Truman Plan to change the social structure of the country, the historical *Khan-Rayat* class-structure remained in the new social structure of Bam. Due to the mechanisation of agriculture which freed a great number of people, residents of villages and towns migrated towards the bigger cities. The people were drawn to the opportunity of work, new infrastructures, a growing service and industry sector, and health and leisure institutions.

The allocation of land to these newcomers was influenced by the unequal distribution of access to resources. As the studies of Ekhlaspour (2008) reveal, while one group of *Khans* had the authority over the local government and City Council, the other group of *Khans* controlled the land market, bazaar, and industrial factories. To accommodate newcomers, construction business became prosperous and new houses were built. In 1966, about one third of houses in Bam were less than ten years old (Ekhlaspour, 2008).

Due to the fact that industry, land and property markets were in the hands of the *Khans*, the social gap in Bam was intensified. Rich families became richer and many rural immigrants became even more vulnerable than before. Despite the prosperous construction business, in 1966, thirty eight percent of inhabitants owned no land or property and were living in properties belonging to someone else (either as a renter or worker) (Ekhlaspour, 2008). The *Khans* moved their families to bigger cities like Kerman or Tehran or to other capital cities. Poor rural immigrants, not being able to afford property in Bam, started to build up their own mud-built houses in the city. According to the studies of Ekhlaspour (2008), 77.3 percent of houses in this period were mud-built.

## 5.5 Revolution: The New regime, new institutions

The new regime following the revolution of 1979 brought about new opportunities and new social institutions. Being in opposition to the previous regime, the new regime aimed to deconstruct the current structure and reshape the socio-economic form of the whole country. Many *Khans* being in favour of the previous regime had no place in the new regime (since the new Islamic regime did not legitimise the superiority of previous bourgeois and feudal classes and confiscated all of their belongings) left the country and their land which they could not take with them. As a consequence many pieces of land were abandoned without legitimate title or deed under the new regime; landless residents benefited from this situation and occupied these lands, and often were successful in legitimising it as their own through buying them from para-governmental organizations or other ways.

The new regime which presented itself as a supporter of the deprived, tried to provide more opportunities through new institutions. *Jahade-Sazandegi* (volunteers for development) was one of the public institutions created in the early days after the revolution. Its members were citizens passionate about developing the country through new opportunities that the regime brought about. They were financially supported by the government. Their main job was to provide basic infrastructure for the most deprived towns and villages<sup>2</sup>. Due to their efforts, many villages which were damaged and depreciated through the 1960s and 1970s out-migration of their residents, revived and in some cases, the migrated residents returned. This was also the case in towns and villages around Bam.

Another reform was the organisation of the farming system. The *Mosha* farming system was presented whereby groups of five to ten farmers could work on the land provided to them by the government with farming infrastructure and tools. Wells were dug to facilitate the irrigation system. Whoever could improve the *qanat*

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<sup>2</sup> Jahade-Sazandegi later merged into the Ministry of Agriculture and consequently (or as a consequence of) the volunteerism spirit was lost.

system or revitalise an unproductive piece of land was able to claim the land as one's own. Through these supporting policies, more than 1200 households gained land ownership in Bam (Ehlaspour, 2008). Bam is the most agricultural area of the province with more than thirty eight percent of its population being farmers (National Census 1996). In other sectors, (service and industry) however, the city is not prosperous.

The inability of the service and industry sectors to create adequate job opportunities to cover the employment demand resulted in the creation of a number of vulnerable groups and an increase in drug dealing. Traditionally, the residents of Bam's surrounding towns and villages moved seasonally towards the city to work on agricultural land. This was because the wages were higher in the city and it was easier to find a market for their crops. In harvest seasons, the job seekers resided on the outskirts of the city in tents or other kinds of temporary shelters. With the expansion of the city came a number of problems: The rise in unemployment; the dependency of the economy on agriculture; and a marginal society made up of a group of Afghan Refugees - all living on the borders of the city. Major landholders took advantage of this opportunity and divided their lands into smaller sizes and sold them to the new immigrants of the city<sup>3</sup> (Ekhlaspour, 2008).

This agriculturally dependent society brought about another vulnerability factor to the families: large household sizes. Traditional beliefs that valued high fertility were still respected in Bam. As the studies of Behzadfar (2006) reveal, in 1966, the average household size in Bam was 5.26; thirty years later in 1996 (seven years before the earthquake) the average household member in Bam remained 5.2 (Behzadfar, 2006).

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<sup>3</sup> *Eishabad* and *Fakhrabad* were among the most damaged places in the earthquake. *Eishabad* is studied in this research.

## 5.6 Citizenship and entitlement

The expansion of the city and transition of the residents from the city to the surrounding towns created a blurring of the boundaries demarking the city. Moreover, it led to uncertainty among residents regarding their identity – who was a Bami? In Bam, the line between rural and urban was never clear. The imperial move from inside the walls of the historic city (now a tourist site of the ancient Citadel of Bam) in 1824 (Baastani-Rad, 2007) to the surrounding lands was due to the investments by the *Khans* on the *qanats* system and transferring from a bazaar based economy to an agriculturally-based one. This attracted many residents from inside-the-wall-city to the fields outside the wall. Gradually, while the city expanded, the *Khans* accommodated the temporary farmers who came from the surrounding towns, in cheap accommodation within the city. In the 1960s, due to western style development projects and land reforms, another group of immigrants arrived in the city. After the revolution of 1979, the efforts of *Jahade-Sazandegi* created another population movement and lessened the inward migration to the city; but as discussed earlier, the livelihood vulnerability of residents from the surrounding towns pushed the rural residents into the city.

So who were the Bami? Were they the wealthy landowners who moved to Tehran or Kerman and ran their life through their possessions? Or were they the farmers who resided in the margins of the city and lived through daily communes in Bam and who worked on the lands of the absent landlord? What about the landless petty workers who have resided on un-claimed lands for decades without any formal deeds? What then counts for being a resident of Bam: birthplace, landholding, having Bami ancestors, speaking with a Bami accent, or residing in Bam for a specific amount of time?

This obscurity was reflected in the formal statistics. In a report, the consultancy responsible for planning the reconstruction of Bam (*Armanshahr*) states that: “The population of the city of Bam before the earthquake in 1382 [solar Persian calendar

equal to 2003 AD] according to the national census was reported as 89145, however the consultancy through investigations realised that in the census of 1382, some of the blocks outside the city limits were included in the census; excluding those blocks the population would be 86930” (*Armanshahr*, Behzadfar, 2006). In an interview with Papuli and Garaxian (2008), two archaeologists studied post-earthquake Bam and it was revealed that “despite the fact that the government presented the number of deaths in Bam as 26770, we counted 30730 tombs in the cemetery whose death was due to the earthquake. The formal death toll was according to the void identity cards reported, however there were residents like Afghan refugees who resided in Bam for years without any identity card”. Later in reconstruction period people without formal identity card became marginalized in benefiting the reconstruction services.

## **5.7 “City” of Bam Today**

Bam is located in south east of Iran in a dry and desert like area. Palm groves are the main characteristic of Bam which gets irrigated through *qanats* – which creates a sense of nostalgia for the people of Bam. Dates are one of the main products of the area; Bam’s dates are among the most famous in the world. It is one of the most difficult types of fruits to cultivate. To fertilise the female flowers (pistils) which do not occur naturally, each date palm (which can be thirty metres tall) must be accessed by a climbing frame by the farmer who then leaves a small spike of the stamen in the pistil of the date. The difficulty of date cultivation has connected Bami people to the palms emotionally and this is seen in both the architecture and urban feature: Bam consists of blocks of palm groves and residential houses which are situated among the palm groves. For this reason, Bam is called the “garden city”.

In 2003, the region of Bam had a population of around 223,000. The region of Bam must be distinguished from the city of Bam. The city is the main focus of this research and is the most populated within the Bam region; the population was 88,000 in 2003. The ratio of urban to rural population of Bam was 51.4 percent in 2003, less



than the overall province (62.4 %) and country (66 %). Therefore, it can be concluded that in the Bam region, agriculture and traditional values, like large families and strong family bonds, play an important role in shaping the social structure of the area.

The following figures support this conclusion. The average population of villages in the region of Bam based on the 1996 census was two hundred; more than the province's average rural population of 153 in the same year. The average family size in 1996 in the Bam region was 5.5 (the city of Bam having an average family size of 5.2 and an average family size in rural areas of 5.6). This is compared to the Kerman province which was 5.08 in the same year and the country's average family size of 4.8 in 1996 (with an average rural family size of 5.1 and an urban family size of 4.1). This shows that the Bam region has relatively large families.

Moreover, based on a recent study of the President's deputy strategic planning and control department, while most of the provinces of the country had a negative population growth rate in their rural areas between the years 1996 to 2006, Kerman province was among the five provinces which had a positive growth rate in their rural population during the same period. This could be due to the high birth rate of the region. Additionally, another figure shows that the annual population growth rate in Bam city between the years 1966 to 1996 was 3.87% (according to the Iran national census organisation); the least among other cities of the province. This may show that the city of Bam did not have much to attract people from the surrounding rural areas; maybe due to the semi-agricultural way of life in the city which did not make much of a distinction between the rural and urban areas of the region.

Ahmadzadeh *et al* in a study about Bam in 2007 defined the structure of Bam before the earthquake as follows:

Residential units in Bam are scattered all through the city through a two-hundred-year process. Only in a small central area we can see dense urban

form which accommodates petty traders and retailers...other than that other wards shaped initially as palm-groves and orchards with residential units spread among them and gradually with development of connecting roads and streets they got linked and shaped a textured form. Moreover, there is a marginal area in borders of the city formed by rural migrants (p79-80).

## **5.8 Demography of Bam**

According to Table 5.1, in 1996 while 60% of the country's population was less than twenty five years old, the figure in the region of Bam was 65.7 % and in the city of Bam 61.25%, a bit higher than in the country overall. This means that at the time of the earthquake in 2003, the majority of the population was thirty two years old or less. Therefore, the target population for reconstruction had to be the young generation. Considering that 34.66% of the total population within the region in 1996 were among the eleven to twenty four year olds, in 2003, about one third of the population were aged eighteen to thirty two years. These young people were about to start a family and were in need of affordable housing. Taking into account that the earthquake may have killed more elderly people due to their vulnerability, the proportion of young couples in need of new homes may have increased after the earthquake.

In terms of literacy, according to Table 5.2, based on the 1996 census, the literacy rate of the region was a bit lower than the country as a whole. Despite the higher literacy figures of urban areas in Bam which were more than the national average, the low rate of rural literacy made the region's average literacy rate lower than the national average. It has to be noted that the difference in the female literacy rate in the Bam region (and urban and rural areas of Bam) from the female national literacy rate is 2.1% ( $74.2(\%) - 72.1(\%) = 2.1(\%)$ ); lower than the difference of the male literacy rate which is 5.1% ( $84.7(\%) - 79.6(\%) = 5.1(\%)$ ) from the male national literacy rate (Table 5.2). This shows that compared to national scales Bami women have a relatively better situation than their male counterparts in terms of literacy.

**Table 5.1: Distribution of the population according to age (%): 1996**

	Total	Less than one year	One to five years-old	6-10 years-old	11-14 years-old	15- 24 years-old	25-64 years-old	More than 65 years old
<b>Iran</b>	100%	1.69%	11.21%	14.60%	11.99%	20.54%	35.58%	4.32%
<b>Kerman province</b>	100%	1.81%	12.17%	15.53%	12.73%	20.87%	32.60%	4.28%
<b>Bam region</b>	100%	1.66%	12.80%	16.58 %	13.68%	20.98%	30.32%	3.95%
<b>Urban</b>	100%	1.46%	10.66%	15.33%	13.22%	20.86%	34.72%	3.75%
<b>Bam city</b>	100%	1.48%	10.47%	15.30%	13.19%	20.81%	35.09%	3.66%
<b>Rural</b>	100%	1.81%	14.38%	17.48%	14.04%	21.06%	27.12%	4.11%

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran

**Table 5.2: Literacy rate according to sexuality: 1996**

	Male and female	Male	Female
<b>Iran</b>	79.5%	84.7%	74.2%
<b>Kerman Province</b>	78.2%	81.6%	74.8%
<b>Bam region</b>	75.8%	79.6%	72.1%
<b>Urban</b>	85.4%	87.6%	83%
<b>Bam city</b>	86%	88.1%	83.9%
<b>Rural</b>	68.7%	73.3%	64.2%

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran

## 5.9 Earthquake-hit Bam

On the morning of 26 December 2003 at 05:28 (local time), a major earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale struck Bam. It took the lives of nearly thirty thousand people, left over twenty five thousand injured and about seventy five thousand homeless. Approximately eighty five percent of the houses, commercial units, health and educational facilities and administrative buildings in the city and surrounding villages were either severely damaged or completely destroyed (UN, 2004). The 2,500 year-old historic Citadel of Bam (*Arg-e-Bam*), an internationally famous heritage site, was almost completely destroyed.

After the earthquake, due to the severity of the disaster, many national and international organisations and volunteers offered financial and non-financial aid to the area. Almost all the Iranian people did whatever they could to help their fellow citizens to decrease their suffering in the cold winter of Bam.

According to Jenty Wood Oxfam's Humanitarian Programme Manager for Iran, in the first two weeks after the earthquake over 120 tonnes of relief supplies and 1,900 international personnel arrived in Bam, complementing the 4,500 tonnes of supplies and 8,600 personnel already deployed by the Iranian government and the Red Crescent. Many professionals in the relief sector considered the initial response exemplary, and it is true that the performance in accordance to key indicators was impressive. There were no significant disease outbreaks; according to the Iranian Red Crescent the first food and water distributions began within 12 hours, and over 20,000 tents were distributed within the first three days.

### **5.9.1 Appointment of Organisational Structures for the Reconstruction of Bam**

Decision-makers started to formulate administrative organising systems and long-term plans for reconstructing Bam. The result divided the reconstruction process into three phases of emergency (temporary tent shelters in urban areas that were located either on the sites of original dwellings or in campgrounds in the outskirts of the city), transitional shelter (structures built out of prefabricated components that could be erected in a short time and were either built on original plots or in the campgrounds on the outskirts of the city), and permanent shelter (permanent houses in the urban areas as laid out in the Master Plan<sup>4</sup>, which was adopted in September 2004).

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<sup>4</sup> The Master Plan was initially designed before the earthquake in 2002 by a profound Tehrani Consultant company. After the earthquake and with the start of reconstruction the Master Plan was

Another outcome was the conception of the Strategic Reconstruction Bureau (*Setade-Rahbordi-e-Bazsazi*): a governmental organisation consisting of Ministers of Housing, Interior, Justice, Finance and Economy, Culture and Chairmen of Housing Foundation, the Iranian Red Crescent, Management and Planning Organisation, Cultural Heritage Organisation, and Kerman Province Governor. The initial function of the Bureau was to invite five of the greatest architects of Iran to design the reconstruction plan of Bam and later shape the Council of Architecture and Urban Development. The result was to put some of the best construction consultancy companies (which were mainly located in Tehran) in charge of designing a new Master Plan for the city of Bam, and to propose legislation for the physical reconstruction of the city.

The implementation of the projects to reconstruct the residential and commercial units was given to a Housing Foundation representative in Bam called *Setad*. Bam was later divided into ten districts and each district was managed by sub-*Setads* coming in from different provinces of Iran; for example one district was given to a representative from Tehran's Housing Foundation in Bam and another district was monitored by a representative from Khorasan's Housing Foundation. Their job was to monitor the process of reconstruction and deal with any issues from the residents regarding the reconstruction from a physical point of view.

### **5.9.2 Transitional shelter phase**

The transitional shelter phase referred to is the period of transferring affected residents from temporary shelter like tents, prefabricated units and camps, to built houses. This was expected to be a two year period. Tents were mostly used during the emergency phase and accommodated people in groups in public spaces like streets and parks. About thirty thousand tents were provided immediately after the earthquake. With the start of the transitional shelter phase people moved to their pre-

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changed a bit and was handed to the municipality and the Housing Foundation to be applied during the reconstruction phase

earthquake locations and settled into prefabricated units provided by the government through national and international resources. The intermediate shelters built from prefabricated components typically consisted of a single room measuring 16–20 square metres (generally 3 m\*6 m or 4 m\*4 m in plan), which cost about 2,500-3000 USD to build.

Six months after the earthquake, in June 2004, the flattened city was dotted with tents. Now all but a few remain. In their place, are thousands of white box-like prefabricated buildings. Families of up to eight squeezed into a room measuring six by four meters now live in these temporary shelters until the city is rebuilt (Report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in January 2005).

There were some concerns about prefabricated shelters and camp layouts. They were alleged to have been constructed without adequate consideration of cultural requirements. For example, many people were dissatisfied with the latrines being located inside the shelter units as people were used to having their dwelling area separate from sanitary facilities. Concerns were also raised regarding the assembled toilet/shower facilities, primarily because the women were reluctant to use them due to modesty concerns. In some cases, modifications to the existing designs were made to fit with the traditional way of life. Extensions to the shelter units in the camps which were adjacent to each other could be seen by people drawing curtains to separate their units from their neighbours to provide privacy. Improvements were also made to the prefabricated units built on private property to be consistent with typical dwellings in Bam, where traditionally, several families would live under one roof. In some cases, where families took the initiative to contribute to their own funds, it was possible to create a more suitable living space by combining two intermediate shelters.

Due to the earthquake, the middle class and those who could afford the minimum cost of living in other cities, moved to neighbouring cities (according to an article by

Papuli this migration was short term and simply a transitional shelter phase where many people ended up returning to Bam). Meanwhile, many people from other towns came to Bam hoping to create a new life and benefit from the aid. This created concern about the long-term effects of these camps, since there were many renters and migrants from the villages, and there was a risk that these units would continue to be occupied by these dwellers and create marginal residents or slum dwellings.

To benefit reconstruction loans households should prove their ownership of the land. The victims of the earthquake lost documents and deeds (if they had any) for their properties. Generally, local neighbours provided evidence for each other in order to prove ownership of the land. There were of course occasions where agencies provided false evidence in an opportunistic way and won the land. In many cases, where an entire family had died, other relatives often from other cities would come to inherit the land. Pre-earthquake renters, landless residents and newcomers would face difficulties in their legitimacy to benefit from reconstruction policies. Loan-based reconstruction policy only benefited those who could prove their land ownership.

Despite the reconstruction plan being central, post-earthquake Bam was being shaped by unplanned and unexpected outcomes. One of the main issues was the huge inflow of newcomers. After the earthquake, the demographic of the city changed. Many people entered the city from neighbouring areas. According to one of *Setad's* managers, the population of Bam before the earthquake was about one hundred thousand people. Formal resources specified that the earthquake had killed more than thirty thousand people (informal resources revealed an amount more than sixty thousand); one year after the earthquake the population was about 120,000 people. This shows a huge amount of new residents; more than fifty percent of Bam's pre-earthquake population. It can be presumed that many people came to the city hoping to use the grants and opportunity to claim land and loans. This fact made the participation of the "local people" more difficult and problematic.



Participation was supposed to be one of the main elements of Bam's reconstruction. Ayatollah Khamenei has called this year [2005] the year of people's participation. But in practice, the participation was more problematic than it was expected. After the earthquake, a huge amount of people from other cities flew to the city. The city's population was redefined several times, but it is still more than its pre-earthquake population. People are living in prefabs that the government gave them. Each of these prefabs cost the government two million Toman<sup>5</sup>s [2,200 USD]. Many people, including the new comers do not care for more i.e. permanent houses; they are either non-local opportunists or landless residents who are happy with prefabs since they cannot prove the ownership of the land. The government is giving people ten million Tomans [11,000 USD] to gradually rebuild their houses but they have to first prove ownership of the land and then apply for to the contractor. After that they can apply for loans from the banks. Moreover, because of the fear of the earthquake some other people are afraid of sleeping under a built roof and hence do not apply for (or use) loans for the construction of permanent houses (As a member of *Setad* revealed in an interview in 2005).

This inflow of newcomers created a culture of distrust among the local and non-local residents. Newcomers were labelled as *Narmashiri*. *Narmashir* is a town near Bam where citizens of Bam felt superior to its residents the same feeling of superiority which urban dwellers now felt about rural dwellers. *Narmashiri* was used to refer to all newcomers from the surrounding areas to Bam.

Another feature of post-earthquake Bam that was not planned, and partly was the side-effect of the loan-based reconstruction plan, was the fostering of a new business: taxi driving. The central reconstruction process along with the inflow of numerous Tehrani and international NGO staff created a need for non-local professionals to provide taxi services to transfer people into this unfamiliar city. The

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<sup>5</sup> The official currency of Iran (IRR), but due to inflation prices are often referred to in Toman. 1 Toman= 10Rials

inflow of professionals and NGO workers was to such an extent that flights from Tehran to Bam increased to two per day and remained at this rate for years after the earthquake. Moreover, as will be discussed in the NGO chapter later, most of these non-local professionals resided in *Arge-jadid*, a modern development which is located 10-kilometres from the eastern part of Bam city. For their commute into Bam, they needed local drivers familiar with the area.

Many Bami residents, in the absence of a comprehensive livelihood reconstruction plan, found this an opportunity hard to ignore. Many people lost their shops in the earthquake and considering the complicated process to apply for commercial loans and the decrease in demand for retailers since the earthquake, taxi-driving was a less complicated and more fruitful business option. Some people had worked for the historical Citadel of the Bam tourist centre which was totally destroyed in earthquake. To afford cars they used an initial loan instalment. They continued living in the prefabs; hoping that by taxi-driving they would eventually save enough money to be able to rebuild their homes.

One of the side effects of this was the increase in number of female drivers (not necessarily as taxi-drivers) in the city, which would have been rare before the disaster. Many of these women had lost their husbands and had to commute to the cemetery from surrounding areas. They found themselves driving because it was a safer and easier way to travel. In later years, the first female taxi-driving agency in Bam was inaugurated.

### **5.9.3 NGOs in Bam**

In this research, the term ‘NGO’ refers to local, national and international organisations that have been involved in the reconstruction process and who have played key roles through the provision of social, cultural, and economic development programmes. Such programmes include assessing people’s needs, fundraising, providing social and community services, vocational training and public education,

and environmental protection. More than thirty five international NGOs helped the State Welfare Organisation deliver social services (Kerman SWO chairman, Qods newspaper, September 2006).

Over two hundred international organisations arrived in Bam in the first two weeks after the earthquake. To assist in the coordination effort, the Iranian government and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) set up a camp for international organisations on a former sports field. OCHA also established sectoral coordination meetings and strengthened links with the Iranian Red Crescent; the lead agency for the response. In the early phases of reconstruction, NGOs had good communication with each other and were effective in the field:

Organisations helped each other, and personal relations were good. Oxfam borrowed tents from Save the Children, and Médecins Sans Frontières who provided supplies to other organisations. There was a strong sense that everyone simply wanted to get things done to help the people of Bam. There were also more formal coordination mechanisms. A group of five agencies banded together to initiate a joint latrine procurement tender using agreed standards and specifications. The tender failed in the end, but it was proof that organisations were willing to cooperate and to agree standards and approaches in a coordinated matter. A system initiated by the Iranian Red Crescent, dividing the city into 12 zones each to be assisted by a different provincial branch, was rapidly picked up by international NGOs, who agreed to accept assigned zones and to focus their assessment and intervention work in these areas. (Oxfam Report in Bam, July 2004).

## **5.10 The International Organisations**

International organisations such as the United Nations and its related agencies are among the key stakeholders in the Bam reconstruction process. The United Nations

Development Program (UNDP) worked closely with the government of Iran, local and provincial authorities, as well as affected communities. The UNDP's priorities are mainly capacity building, empowerment, vulnerability reduction, and coordination of international efforts through various training programmes. UNESCO is also involved in the reconstruction process by providing scientific and technical advice, training and education, mobilising financial assistance, and also by creating a task force to coordinate UNESCO's actions in response to the damage to a world heritage site (Asgary, 2004).

UNICEF was involved in six projects: Psycho Social Intervention, Early Child Care Centres (ECCC) and Recreational Centres, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WSH), Education, Child friendly cities, and Family Reunification.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) was another agency that was active in Bam. It had close connections with the Ministry of Sanitation and Health in terms of monitoring sanitation and health issues since the earthquake. They created 10 urban health centres in Bam. Their efforts resulted positively by ensuring that there was no widespread epidemic in the city after the earthquake.

## **5.11 The Local Government**

The Bam Municipality and the Bam City Council are the two most important local government bodies in the city. Issuing building permits, dealing with subdivision and setback applications, and recovering building titles and official documents were among the major activities of the City Council. The City Council, as mentioned in chapter four, is almost independent from central government financially and is therefore self-reliant; the Ministry of Interior covers a small proportion of the expenses of the municipality of Bam. After the earthquake, the government allocated income for the construction of commercial and residential unit licenses to Bam's Municipality.

To increase the Municipality income, we made a contract with a private company to implement a construction development on the previous land of the Municipality (in reconstruction the Municipality was relocated). The Municipality could benefit from forty percent of the development and another sixty percent would be given to the private company. Shops of the development that belonged to the Municipality are now rented and bring in income. We suggested selling the land instead of taking part in the project, but the City Council rejected this. We thought that by selling the land there was a possibility for corruption as the money may get into the pockets of those in power (Head member of Bam City Council, 2008).

The City Council is quite a new concept in urban governance in Bam (see chapter four). Before 1999, urban governance was very central: there was the mayor and the governor who were directly appointed by the Ministry of Interior. In 1999, the first City Council of Bam (along with other cities of Iran) was inaugurated with seven members - all from Bam and elected by the people. The Mayor was elected by the City Council.

In practice, the City Council has the least presence in urban governance (see chapter four, section 4.4). In the case of Bam, the reconstruction created an opportunity for members of the City Council to get involved in various fields of reconstruction and expand their authority. To achieve this aim, local members of the City Council tried to fight their way through:

In the early days after the earthquake, we sent a letter to the President's office and shared our plan about reconstruction. In that letter we asked for responsibility to design the reconstruction plan under the supervision of the local people. This did not happen in practice. Initially our voices were so insignificant in the decision making process but we fought for our rights. The City Council was not regarded as an implementing organisation. Therefore, we tried to carry out our own advocacy for the local people. We did not want

to let the city be relocated elsewhere and we were also against the establishment of temporary camps. Moreover, all international aid for the reconstruction of Bam went directly to the Ministry of Interior and the local government was not aware of the amount and had no access to it.

There were even times that our challenges were violated with central organisations. For example, on one occasion, we had a confrontation with the Ministry of Housing. The Ministry of Housing decided to build a library on a piece of land that we already had allocated to another NGO. We requested the representative of the Ministry of Housing to use some other place for their project since that land was already allocated. The Ministry neglected our request and unloaded the construction materials on the land as a sign of occupation. It should be mentioned that the land was situated in a strategic location to the entrance of the city and in view of the public. In protest, we emptied the land of construction materials and regained the possession of it.

We also raised the government's grants for reconstruction of houses. At first the government's financial support was 2.5 million Toman (two and a half thousand USD) as a grant and 6.5 million Toman (six and half thousand USD) as a loan. That could hardly cover the cost of reconstruction. We tried to use available means - liaising and media - to increase the amount. This issue even made coverage on the BBC. Finally, the government's support increased to 16.5 million Toman (sixteen and half thousand USD).

The earthquake had destroyed more than eighty percent of the historical Citadel of Bam. Initially, ten days after the earthquake, the World Bank and UNESCO rejected our request for financial support for the reconstruction of the Citadel because it was claimed that there was no "economic explanation" for the disaster. When the decision was communicated to the local government, I complained and told the representative; "Thank you for your concern but the Citadel will be reconstructed by Bamis themselves if not by

any organisation. The Citadel was originally built by Bami people and not by external agencies so we can do the same again. The Citadel of Bam to Bamis is like the Louvre Museum to Parisians. Bam owes its identity to its Citadel, old bazaar, palm groves, and *qanats*.” Through revealing the Citadel’s importance to us, we got the the UN and WB to provide support. Now the Cultural Heritage Organisation of Iran is rebuilding the Citadel with the help of other international organisations including UNESCO. (Head member of the City Council of Bam).

In terms of accountability, Bamis can air their dissatisfaction with the City Council through the local newspaper, direct contact with members, and quite recently through the Internet. Local newspapers are run by Bami journalists and publish ongoing issues related to the city. Through this research, it became apparent that the newspaper is a popular forum in Bam and people trust it as a means of voicing their concerns. The newspaper office is a small room in an accessible part of the city. After spending one hour there, about ten different types of people visited the newspaper office requesting that their announcement be published or that their small talk with the publisher who ran the newspaper with his son, be heard.

Since the earthquake, news published about the role of the City Council in their reconstruction efforts concentrated on arranging the bodies of the dead from the disaster including transferring, washing, shrouding and burying them; surfacing the emergency roads especially those linked to hospitals, NGOs and Red Crescent centres; providing free transport during the emergency period; reconstructing parks, fire centres, vegetable bazaars and cemeteries; collecting waste and garbage; helping the Housing Foundation branches; and running seminars for earthquake and reconstruction. In terms of transparency, it also revealed a conflict that was going on in the municipality regarding the appointment of the new Mayor in May 2003; seven months before the disaster. The new Mayor was very young and non-local. As the report revealed, during the time of the appointment some of citizens were gathered in front of the municipality to show their opposition to the new Mayor. The governor was also against this appointment but the City Council backed the young Mayor.

While the City Council called for the previous Mayor to resign, the governor resisted signing the inauguration of the new Mayor. For a while, the Municipality was running with two Mayors.

As the City Council's responsibility domain was minor, expectations and claims from it were not considerable. Letters people sent to the municipality were mostly requests from the City Council to intervene between the local people and other organisations; especially during the early months of reconstruction. Most complaints were about temporary shelter and the camp's situation or the difficulty in obtaining loans from *Setad*. Moreover, as discovered through the survey, people sent their claims in the form of letters to the President's office or the supreme leader. People found no powerful or legitimate alternative on a local scale with whom to raise their complaints.

In terms of Internet complaints, this is a very new concept. With a visit to the city council of Bam's website, it becomes clear that use of the Internet is a new idea. There are only two emails sent to the website - the first one is a congratulation note to the new governor in May 2009, and the other is posted in May 2009 asking the mayor about the lack of security in Bam and plans to increase security in the region. The answer was sent two months later in July 2009 from the Mayor claiming that the security in Bam is at an acceptable level especially in comparison with neighbouring cities and it is unfortunate that the city is located on the drug route. It would appear therefore that the use of the Internet is not popular in Bam.

To highlight their role in reconstruction, and in order not to be left marginalised by central government authorities, members of the City Council created a link between appointed characters within the reconstruction process. Mr. Saidikia, the Head of the Reconstruction Body (*Setad*), and the governor were two influential people in the reconstruction with whom the City Council created mutual links:



It has to be mentioned that in most cases Mr. Saiedikia played a great role in advocating for us. At that time he was the highest position in Housing Foundation of Bam. He was our strongest link to central government and he tried to ease the liaising process and license taking processes for us.

The governor at first intended to step in to reconstruction on his own initiative and without asking from any help from us, but I told him that this will damage the whole process of reconstruction; a family in which all the pressure is on the father of the family is not fair; we all have to cooperate.

Generally, there is a lack of connection among organisations which has an adverse consequence on reconstruction. This absence of proper co-operation was disconcerting even before the earthquake. Urban services were always poorly delivered. In the case of a water mains issue in the city, due to cooperation between responsible sectors and organisations, the process becomes very time-consuming and inefficient and the provision of water may only last for a few days. Rubble and wasted reconstruction materials are all over the city which has brought the disease Aleppo boil; an epidemic which spreads through flies living in dust (Head member of the City Council in Bam).

After three years since the earthquake, a new era for urban governance in Bam can be distinguished. Macro projects of central government along with a housing reconstruction phase approached its end and hence the role of central government in reconstruction became small. Simultaneously, the role of the City Council in urban governance intensified. National government changed and Saidikia, the most important person in the reconstruction effort of Bam was promoted to the Minister of Housing. The City Council started its third round with new members. This created links between the previous members of the City Council and Saidikia was no longer of use. The third course was left again with minor capacity to act in micro projects

of urban furnishing. This was apparent from the words of the new Head member of the City Council:

The main mission of the City Council is to help the municipality put the city in order and make it a pleasant place. But the municipality's mission comes last in the process of urban reconstruction since we have to wait for other service providing organisations like water and electricity to finish their projects and then we step in to furnish the city. Our activities have sped up especially in the last eight months - including signing the roads and streets, asphalt and pavement. We are also in charge of creating green space for the city. We are waiting for the funding from central government to run our projects.

Along with the change of the members, the links changed as well and not only in terms of connecting to new organisations but also in the nature of communication. The City Council's role was not proactive anymore and merely became a link to deliver local people's complaints to central authorities:

In terms of cooperation with other organisations, I can mention the Cultural Heritage of Iran Organisation as the organ that we had the most contact with especially in regard to the reconstruction of the Citadel and the Bazaar. The Housing Foundation was the other organisation that we had cooperation with. In relation to the dissatisfaction of households with the Housing Foundation or with its fourteen branches in wards we tried to lubricate communication between these organs and citizens through liaising, asking for financial support, and consultation. We also reflected people's dissatisfaction with other service provider organisations - like the electricity and water providing organisations. We also cooperated with finance and land offices regarding building licenses and valuing land. Moreover, we have weekly sessions with citizens so that anyone who wants to share something with the City Council

can call them on Saturdays when all of the members are present and ready to help.

Despite the opportunity reconstruction brought to highlight the role of the City Council in urban governance, unfortunately this aim did not come into practice in the long term. As reconstruction approached its end, along with the change of active agencies in reconstruction, the City Council lost its influence. Its role returned as a local guard for the city - furnishing limited financial support and dependency on central government.

## **5.12 Relief Foundation and the State Welfare Organisation**

In Iran's social welfare system, the Emam Khomeini Relief Foundation and State Welfare Organisation of Iran are the two most important organisations for supporting vulnerable groups. The Emam Khomeini Relief Foundation was established in 1979 in the early days after the revolution. It was established as a non-profit organisation to support and empower vulnerable and deprived people. It functions under the supervision of the Supreme Leader. The official website of the Foundation defines its objective as follows:

The aim of establishing The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation is to offer supportive, cultural and living services to the needy and deprived people living inside and outside the country in order to provide self-reliance, strengthen and increase faith as well as preserving the human dignity.

The financial resources of Imam Relief consist of<sup>6</sup>:

A) The support of the supreme leader.

B) The budgets and aides of the Islamic Republic Government.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Emam Khomeini Relief Foundation official website

C) The aid and donations of people, institutions, organisations and foundations inside and outside the country.

D) Alms, vows, Zakat.

E) Income resulting from the economic activities of Emam Relief.

**Table 5.3: Emam Relief Foundation Aid in Bam in 1999**

Emdad Project <sup>7</sup>					Rajaie Project <sup>8</sup>				
No. of Households	No. of people	Aids (Thousand Rial)			No. of Households	No. of People	Aids (Thousand Rial)		
7085	24840	cash	ware	total	5828	15253	cash	ware	total
		6025189	257190	6282379			4765559	8740	4774299

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran

<sup>7</sup> Emdad Project: supports vulnerable people like single-mother households, the disabled, aged parents and imprisoned-fathers, temporarily or permanently on the basis of each case of vulnerability.

<sup>8</sup> Rajaie Project: supports senior residents, over sixty years old, in rural areas and nomads, and their dependants financially on a monthly basis.

**Table 5.4: Emam Relief Foundation Aids in Bam in 2003, 2005, 2008** (Source: Statistical Centre of Iran)

	<b>Emdad Project</b>		<b>Rajaie Project</b>	
<b>2003</b>	No. of people	Aids (Thousand Rial)	No. of People	Aids (Thousand Rial)
	24518	9843246	14207	7340587
<b>2005</b>	No. of people	Aids (Thousand Rial)	No. of People	Aids (Thousand Rial)
	28874	58512821	13465	29381472
<b>2008</b>	No. of people	Aids (Thousand Rial)	No. of People	Aids (Thousand Rial)
	33432	59402440	13542	28426410

With a look at the tables above (extracted from the Statistical Centre of Iran) the Emam Relief Foundation has two main projects for providing support: Emdad and Rajaie. While the Emdad project covers the most vulnerable groups including the disabled and single or absent-parent households, the Rajaie project merely supports senior residents. As the numbers show, people supported by the Emdad project decreased from 24,840 in 1999 to 24,518 in 2003 (the year of the earthquake) and increased to 28,874 people in 2005 (two years after the earthquake). At the end of 2003, some people previously covered by the Emdad project were killed by the earthquake (since they were among the most vulnerable groups) and because the earthquake occurred at the end of 2003, the new earthquake-affected people are not reflected in the numbers. By the year 2005, about four and a half thousand people were added to the previous number which shows the earthquake-affected group covered by the Emdad project. The number of Rajaie project decreases. The reason for this may be as a result of the death of elderly people as a result of the earthquake. In both cases, the amount of aid increased substantially in 2005 which could be due to the policies designed to cover earthquake loss.

In 2008, five years after the earthquake, the number of vulnerable households covered by the Emdad project increased. From 2003, about nine thousand people got under the Emdad project support which reflects the role of the earthquake on increasing vulnerable households. On average, since the earthquake, annually more than two thousand people have been added to the Emdad Project beneficiaries.

**Table 5.5: Loans given by the Emam Relief Foundation in Bam in 1999, 2003, 2005**

	Empowerment Projects' Loans						Interest-free loans	
1999	Carpet weaving project	Ranching	Farming	Sewing	other	total	No. of cases	Total Amount (Thousand Rial)
	65	710	17	42	92	926	1563	1167480
	Empowerment Projects' Loans						Interest-free loans	
	No. of cases	Total Amount (Thousand Rial)				No. of cases	Total Amount (Thousand Rial)	
2003	462	3771514				948	1456950	
2005	533	11392626				1160	3943621	

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran

According to Tables 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9, the numbers of cases benefitting from loans from the Emam Relief Foundation decreased between 1999 and 2003 (especially empowerment project loans) and then increased in 2005. The decrease in 2003 cannot be due to the earthquake because it happened at the end of 2003. Despite the harsh economic situation of Bam before the earthquake (due to the drought) it is questionable why Emam cut its empowerment loans in 2003. The increase in the number of cases from 2003 to 2005 can be explained as the increase of the number of people becoming vulnerable through the earthquake.

The State Welfare Organisation is a governmental organisation funded through the government's budget to support disabled and deprived people. After the earthquake, the State Welfare Organisation was one of the main centres supporting affected people.

**Table 5.6: State Welfare Organisation services in urban Bam in 2003 and 2008**

	No. of administrative centres	No. of orphanage	No. of Nursery centres	No. of Vulnerable Households' support centres	No. of Educational centre	No. of youth centres
2003	1	4	11	1	1	0
2008	1	9	21	1	0	0

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran



**Table 5.7: People benefitted from SWO services in urban Bam in 2003 and 2008**  
(Source: Statistical Centre of Iran)

	<b>Orphans</b>	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>Vulnerable households (pensioner)</b>	<b>Skill centres (students)</b>	<b>Youth centres' users</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>5240</b>	<b>2876</b>	<b>10143</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>3137</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Since the earthquake, the numbers of orphanage and nursery centres has increased, but the numbers of orphans and children benefitting from nurseries have decreased (Tables 5.10, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13). The decrease in number of orphans supported by the SWO may be due to the increase in NGOs in Bam or due to a transfer of orphans to other cities. NGOs may also play a substitute role for SWO centres in relation to nursery services (one reason for the decrease of nursery users of SWO in Bam since the earthquake).

In a case like Bam where the disaster was extreme, there is an expected increase in the number of vulnerable and dependant households. But surprisingly, the number of pensioners supported by SWO decreased substantially from 2003 to 2008 (Tables 5.12 and 5.13). The fact is that the SWO appeared very inadequate in terms of social support during the reconstruction of Bam. In an interview with the SWO chairman in Kerman in 2006 in Qods newspaper, he declared that the SWO had a severe budget

deficit during the reconstruction period. The financial problem was such that for 2004 and 2005 they could afford to pay only half of their recipients' pensions. Actually, the SWO in Bam since 2005 received minimum finance from central government and this is despite the fact that in Bam the number of single-mother households increased to 2500 (from five hundreds before the earthquake), disabled people to 2700, and orphan or mal-parented children to four thousand (ibid).

### **5.13 Conclusion**

Bam has experienced several twists and turns through its evolution. Once in a while in its history it was the focal point for attention. Its history, along with its geographical situation, gave Bam a character that has made it resistant to the outcomes of the modern world. The earthquake of 2003 has become a turning point in the evolution of Bam. Bam, as a traditional "city" that had problems adapting itself to modern urban factors, like citizenship or non-agricultural and bureaucratic urban styles, had to answer to bureaucratic and modern solutions. Schemes and plans sent from Tehran were applied by non-local contractors. The affected people got social help from international organisations which they had least familiarity... Through this process, opportunities have been created for different stakeholders to learn from each other and create links for long-term communication. Some of these links remained; like the links some NGOs created with local agencies or with each other, and some of them faded away; like those that were created by local government staff with different stakeholders. To be more precise, links between agencies survived but those between organisations that changed their staff evaporated. Governmental organisational social support was channelled through SWO which showed a very weak appearance. The Emam Relief Foundation, on the other hand, as a para-governmental organisation became a sounder substitute for SWO in reconstruction. What the reconstruction resulted in is what this research aims to examine in the following chapters. It will be explored how different stakeholders functioned and how Bam synthesised their collaborations.

## Chapter 6

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# An Analysis of Resilience between Six Districts in Bam

### 6.1 Introduction

It was discussed in chapter three that vulnerability of a community to hazards derives from social and institutional structure of that community. Forms of entitlement and livelihood access are crucial factors in shaping the resilience of the members of a community. The level of importance of different institutions and concepts in a community defines what risk reduction factors are more easily welcomed and adopted. It was discussed that social capital can be an important factor in increasing social resilience through creating links among different stakeholders and it also increases the understanding and trust among them and eases the access of the most vulnerable to resources.

The aim of this chapter is to get a better understanding about the initial form of social capital in the city of Bam before the disaster and studying how after the disaster and during the reconstruction phase those informal institutions that shaped

the social relations and hence the level of social capital in Bam have been changed and what were their effects on the resilience of different households.

In doing so, one hundred and ninety six households were interviewed. It was a 99% sample: the researcher tried to document the experiences of all the members of the six districts by knocking on every door. There was only one household that rejected to participate. Twenty six households were from Ferdosi, twenty seven households were from Eishabad, twenty three households were from Bethat-Almahdi, forty households were from Janbazan, thirty nine households were from Takhti, and forty one households were from Hafezabad.

To study the form and amount of social capital of the sample group the following indexes were used: the geographical closeness of close members of the family like married couples and their parents and the distance of their residential location to their parents', the networking and trust of neighbours together, the trust of the interviewees to their fellow citizens, the change in their social gatherings with relatives, and their sense of having power in affecting their surroundings. Their livelihood situation was also studied to get a better understanding of their vulnerability and the effect of reconstruction on it. The population pyramid of each ward was also studied to compare the population structure of different wards to each other and to Bam in general. It has to be noted that through the initial studies about Bam it was realised that after the earthquake a great number of new-comers entered Bam (see chapter five); however it was difficult from the structured survey to distinguish between the new immigrants and the old dwellers; almost all of the interviewees stated that they were living in Bam before the earthquake.

In this regard this chapter consists of six main sections. The first section studies the family bonding ties of a sample community and compares it with the situation pre-disaster. The second section examines the effect of bonding ties on livelihoods in six selected districts in Bam. This is achieved by linking the dependency rate to the level of access of the households to shelter, car, social support, work and other financial

resources. The third section explores the age and gender structure of the six wards and tries to establish if any outstanding relationship exists among these factors and the resilience of the residents. The fourth section considers the effect of reconstruction on the level of trust among the sample community (i.e. the residents of the six districts) and aims to see whether the level of trust is related to other factors like affluence and age. The fifth section examines any changes to social and formal networking in the sample community since the earthquake. The sixth section discusses the effect of reconstruction on governance; and how having power influences the community's surroundings.

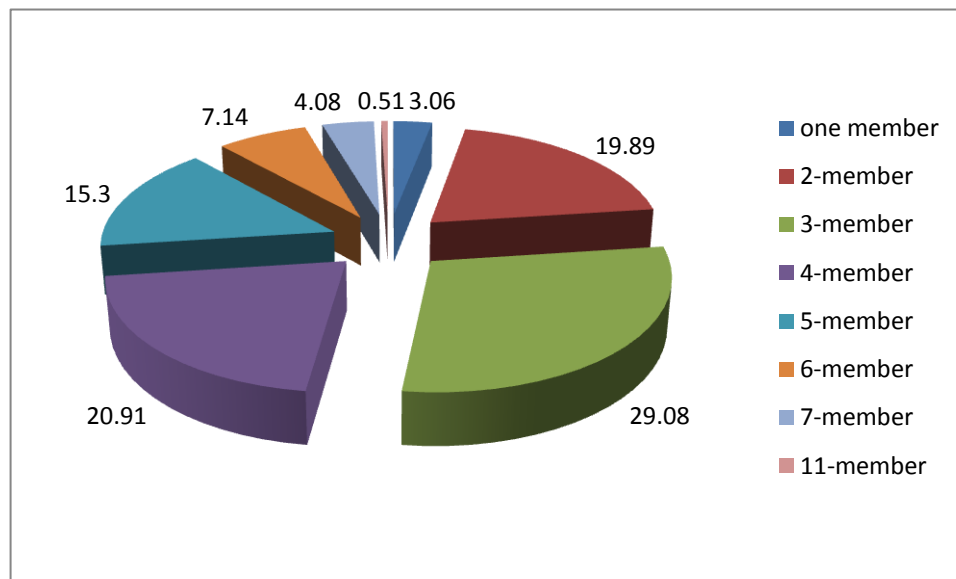
## **6.2 Family Bonding Ties**

Out of 196 households surveyed in Bam, the outcomes of household sizes are shown in Figure 6.1. Figure 6.2 compares the survey with Bam's household size in the last formal census data before the earthquake in 1997. Comparing the two, it will be concluded that the household size of the sample is smaller. While the majority of households in the sample had two, three or four members in 1997, most of Bami households consisted of four to seven members. Three factors could be responsible for that: First, the high death toll of the earthquake which substantially affected the households' size in Bam and second, by choosing the most hit areas in Bam as the sample area.

The third reason could be the development of new families through marriage since the earthquake. During the fieldwork, it was observed during several occasions that families had been divided into smaller families through marriage of the young. One important reason for this was the loan policy which favoured newly wedded households. The designed loan policy had a section that stated those households who married after the earthquake could benefit from loans to build new homes... This increased the number of marriages and brought more people to Bam from neighbouring towns and cities:

Following the loan policy for newly wedded households, many people came to Bam to benefit from the loan: They married the Bami girls or became brides of Bami men. In many cases, parents let their young marry, albeit willingly, as a coping system to access more loans, because in later years with the increase in the price of building materials the allocated loan was not enough for building construction. Through this strategy, households would have a house built plus one or two prefabricated units as separate rooms: Two or three households could live together through this arrangement (one of the Bami residents, 2008).

**Figure 6.1: Household size of the sample community 2008 (Numbers are in percentage)**



As Rakodi rightly argues, 2002, household composition is a determinant of the capabilities, choices and strategies available to a household.

Despite the legal separation and division of households through marriage, geographically this separation showed itself in different forms. In other words, many newly married households did not separate from their parental family geographically and lived at the same place with their parents.

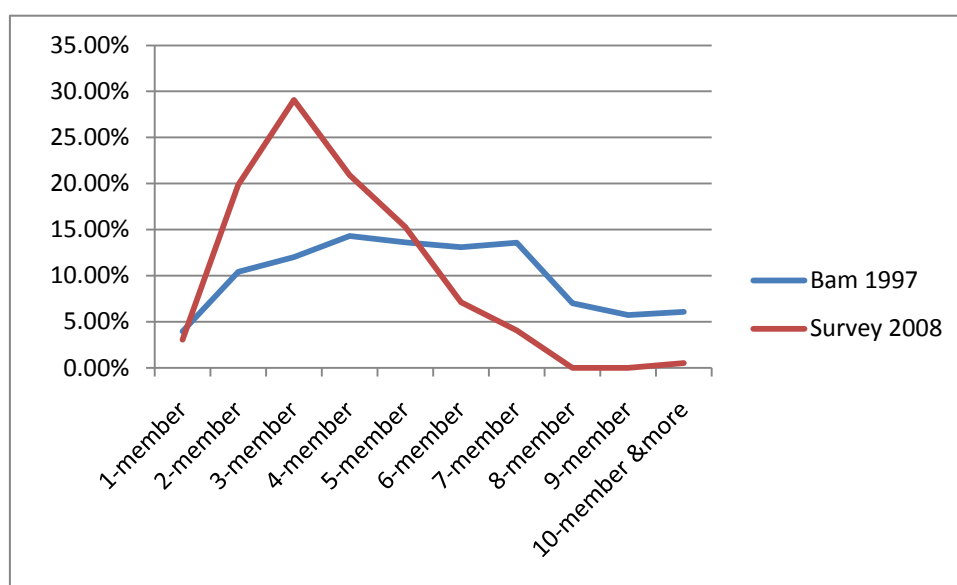
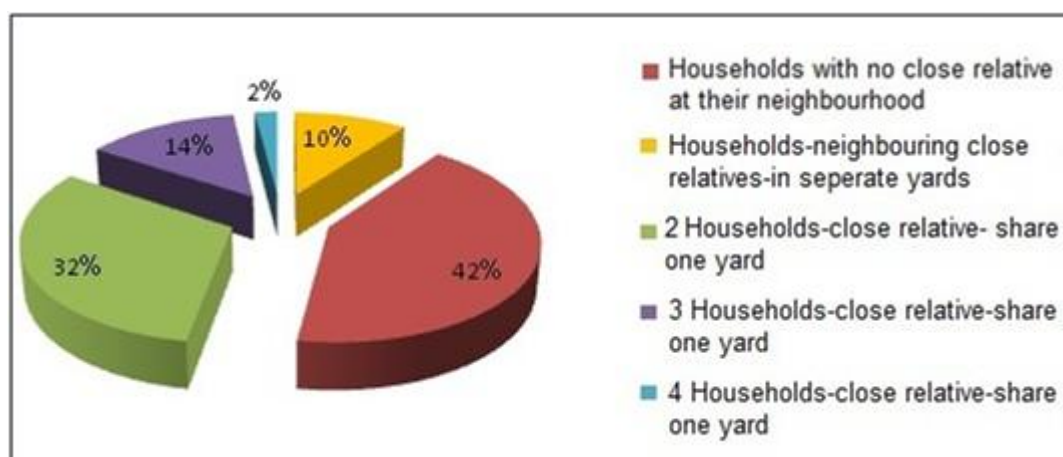
**Figure 6.2: Comparing national census data 1997 and sample data 2008****Figure 6.3: Geographical distance of parents and newly wedded young families of the sample community in 2008**

Figure 6.3 tries to reveal the strength of family bonding ties through the geographical distance of the households to their married children. To find out how much Bami young people are dependent on their family, one factor is to consider how many of them live in their parents' houses, on their lands or on separate land but side-to-side to their parents. The survey reveals that most of the households in the sample (42%)

live independently without any neighbouring connection to their parents or siblings. Thirty two percent of households are households with close family relations (for example, brothers and sisters or as father and son) who share a yard and either live under one roof or in separate shelters. Fourteen percent of households are three households who share one yard with close family connections. Two percent are four households with family relations in one yard and ten percent are households with close family relations who do not share a piece of land but live in neighbouring proximity to each other. To summarise, fifty eight percent of households in the sample community have located their families as close as possible to their relations; parent and siblings. This situation, along with the populated households shown before the earthquake, highlights the strength of family bonding ties in Bam.

These high bonding ties have advantages and disadvantages in times of disaster. As observations have revealed, families with stronger ties and less family loss during the earthquake exhibited less trauma than those with weaker links. In one case, in Hafezabad, an old mason accommodated his five married children in the same street side-by-side in one or two bedroom houses with separate land.

Before the earthquake, the mason had a large area of land which he lived on with his wife, daughters and sons - together in one house. After the earthquake, he lost his wife, one of his sons and one of his daughters so he decided to divide the land among his remaining children and together they built three two-bedroom houses and one one-bedroom.

Because our houses were side by side we could share the construction material and help each other with the construction of the buildings. God is great, He never lets you down; He always helps (the mason, 2008).

Despite the fact that he had lost his wife, four of his children and grandchildren in the earthquake, his behaviour and that of his remaining children was very composed and they were all keen to help. Being situated in the most insecure area of



Bam, and by keeping their links only with each other - excluding themselves from the rest of the district, provided the family with a supporting network which increased their resilience and coping mechanisms.

We do not communicate with residents of the neighbourhood, we only visit each other, and hence we have created a sense of security in the street for ourselves. Our livelihood comes from farming and has not changed much from before the earthquake. We had no contact with any governmental organisation, we rely only on God, and he will help us. We share food and help each other in financial difficulties... we take care of the children together (the mason's daughter-in-law, 2008).

In a troubled city where many of the interviewees mentioned the high crime rate and lack of security, the mason and his family responded to “how serious do you think the theft problem is in the city?” with “none at all”, and their answer to “how much impact do you think you have in making Bam a better place to live?” was “very much” which was a rare response in the survey. In answering the question, "don't you fear theft or crime in the area", the mason replied:

No, together we keep the street safe and take care of each other... and above all it is God who takes care of us.

Their spirits were better than their Bami counterparts. None of them were jobless, sons were active in farming, and the son-in-law who had lost his food store in the earthquake was employed in the reconstruction of the citadel.

After knocking on a door a few houses along, an old man opened the door looking immeasurably sad. He was so depressed that he could not communicate properly; hence his daughter answered the questions. Two members of his household had been killed in the earthquake, - the mother and one of their children. The father had become so depressed because of the loss of his loved ones that he could not work

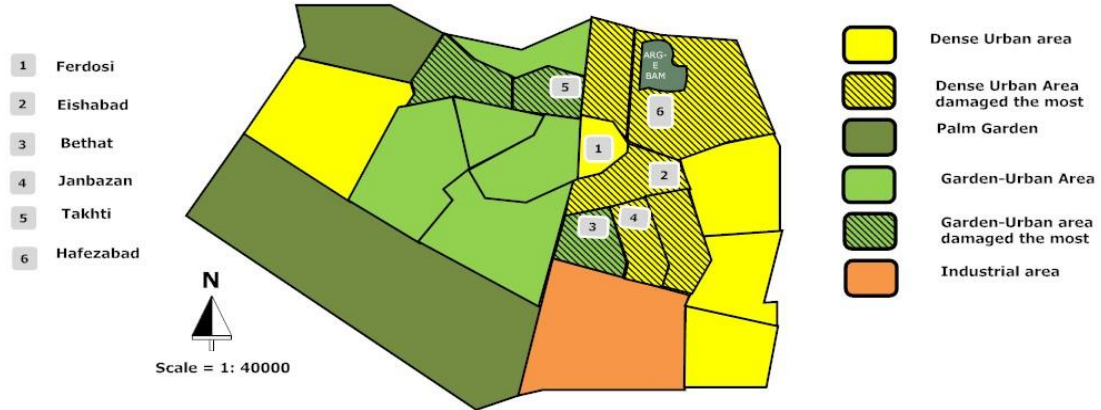
anymore (he was a farmer). The house was rebuilt albeit much smaller than the one before the disaster. There were three sons and one daughter in the household. One of them was married and was living in the same house (which was a small one-bedroom). One of the sons was employed, but another was depressed as well. The household was reliant on the income of the married son who had the responsibility of feeding his own family as well. This placed the family in difficulty regarding livelihood. They felt insecure about their future financial situation, about the area, and about the crime in the city.

The above examples show how strong bonding ties in Bam were either beneficial to the community because the family provided a safety network, or, where family members had died, the bonding stopped because the loss created an inability to cope.

Along with bonding ties, the resilience of households depends on different factors which include affluence, age, gender, dependency rate and networking. These factors will be addressed in the following section by a comparison among different districts in Bam.

### **6.3 Comparing the Six Districts**

The reason for comparing the districts is to find out the characteristics of each according to affluency, networking, dependency rate, age and gender. Then, to establish whether the resilience of the households is related to the characteristics as set out in the table below.

**Figure 2.1: Allocating sample wards on Map of Bam (repeat)****Table 6.1: Character of the districts before the earthquake<sup>1</sup>**

District	Characteristic
<b>Ferdosi</b>	Can be regarded as the most affluent area in Bam. Compared to the other six districts, Ferdosi has the least building damage and is the lowest in density
<b>Eishabad</b>	One of the oldest areas in Bam, there is a mixed type of resident - houses were mud-built and brick-built before the earthquake. Compared to the other six districts, Eishabad experienced medium damage
<b>Bethat- Almahdi</b>	Can not be regarded as one of the oldest areas in Bam. Houses were built mostly from rough bricks. The area experienced severe damage as a result of the earthquake
<b>Janbazan</b>	One of the severely hit areas in Bam. It has dense urban form and houses are mostly in the form of brick-built
<b>Takhti</b>	One of the oldest areas in Bam, severely damaged by the earthquake. Houses before the earthquake were mostly in the form of mud-built
<b>Hafezabad</b>	Locality of the most marginalised people in Bam with a reputation for informal business and drug dealing. Houses were a mix of mud-built and brick-built. The area had medium density before the earthquake

<sup>1</sup> There was no formal data about the districts in the form that they were categorised in this research, so the research relied on local people information and the map provided in the Methodology Chapter.

### **6.3.1 The Livelihood Situation of the Six Districts**

To measure the livelihood situation of the six districts, the following indicators were used. First, measuring the dependency rate of the households. Second, to find the size of households, the age distribution of the households and the geographical distance of close family members like parents and married children or siblings was measured. Two kinds of dependency rate would be measured: The potential and the actual. Potential dependency rate means the number of people who are eligible to work according to their age. The actual dependency rate would be worked out by dividing the number of income bringers of each household to the number of all members of the household.

Moreover, the access of households to a private car, their access to a social care system (i.e. Welfare Organization's (Behzisti) support), and the number of employed people of the household were studied. The access of the residents to shelter was also examined through ascertaining the rate of a person per room with the number of built houses and prefabricated units.

#### **6.3.1.1 Dependency rate**

Questions asked in this regard are<sup>2</sup>:

- How many households live in here?
- Do the households relate to each other? If the answer is "Yes", what is the relation?
- How many members does each household have? Age?
- The occupation of each household's members:
- Source of income of each household before earthquake:

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

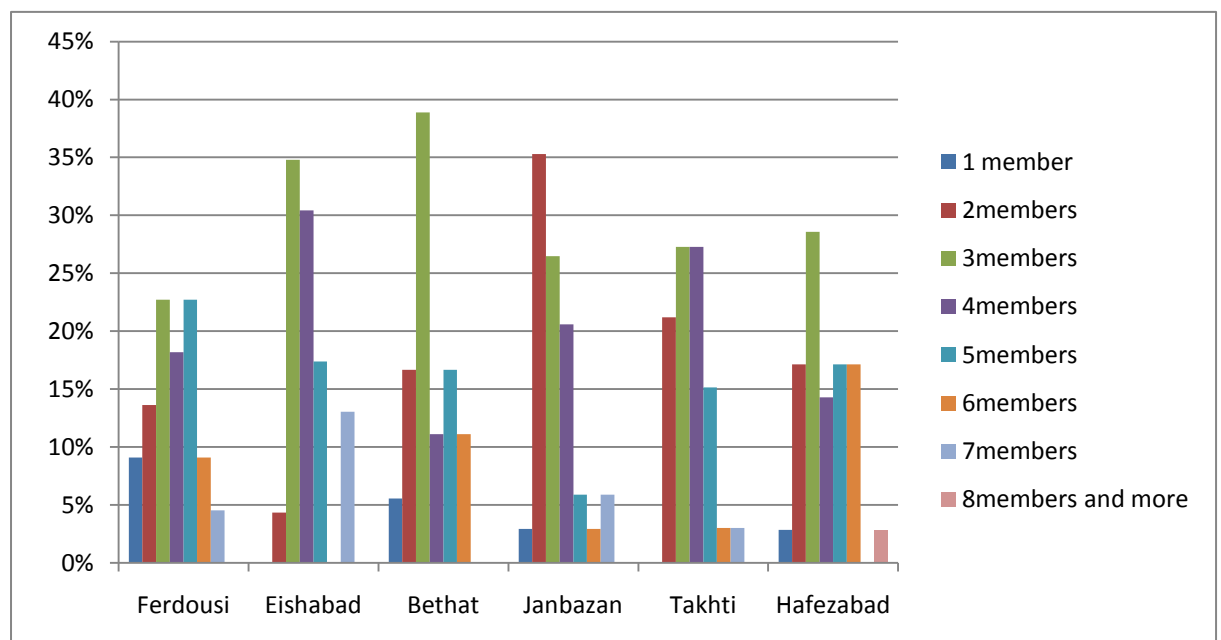
***Ferdosi:*** The majority of households are three to five members; the number of seven or eight-members (and more) is low and it has the highest number of one-member households among the districts (Figure 6.4). Compared to the other five districts, Ferdosi has the lowest number of under five year olds (post-earthquake born children). This could be the result of the low rate of fertility in proportion to the district (it has the lowest rate of fifteen to thirty five year olds among the districts). It also has the highest number of thirty one to sixty year olds and the sample community had no resident over sixty. It has the lowest "Potential dependency rate (based on age)" after Bethat-Almahdi (Figure 6.7). Ferdosi is the only district that has no parent and married children living in one yard but it has the highest rate of households who live in neighbouring proximity to their parents (on different pieces of land) and households whose children were not at their neighbourhood. The sample shows no post-earthquake wedded households in Ferdosi.

***Eishabad:*** Eishabad's figures reveal that the district has the highest three member households after Bethat-Almahdi and has the highest number of four-member households; in fact, three and four-member households are the norm in the district. It also has the highest number of seven-member households (Figure 6.4). Eishabad's number of post-earthquake born babies is relatively high and more of the population are between six and thirty years old. Figure 6.6 shows that Eishabad has the highest number of over sixty year olds. It has the highest "Potential dependency rate (based on age)" among the six districts (Figure 6.7). The district has a relatively high number of people sharing one yard with their parents (Figure 6.8).

***Bethat-Almahdi:*** A great percentage of households in Bethat-Almahdi have three-members. There is no household larger than six-members (Figure 6.4). It has the highest number of people aged between sixteen and thirty and its number of post-earthquake births is relatively high. Bethat-Almahdi has the lowest potential dependency rate among the six districts (Figure 6.7). It means the number of people

who can work according to their age is considerably higher than the number of people who are not expected to work based on their age (i.e. children and seniors). Figure 6.8 shows Bethat-Almahdi has the highest number of young households living in geographical proximity to their parents, and after Ferdosi, it has the lowest number of households who share land with their parents. It has the highest number of post-earthquake wedded households among the districts (Figure 6.9).

**Figure 6.4: Household size in six districts post-earthquake Bam, sample community<sup>3</sup>, 2008 (Q6, App.1)**

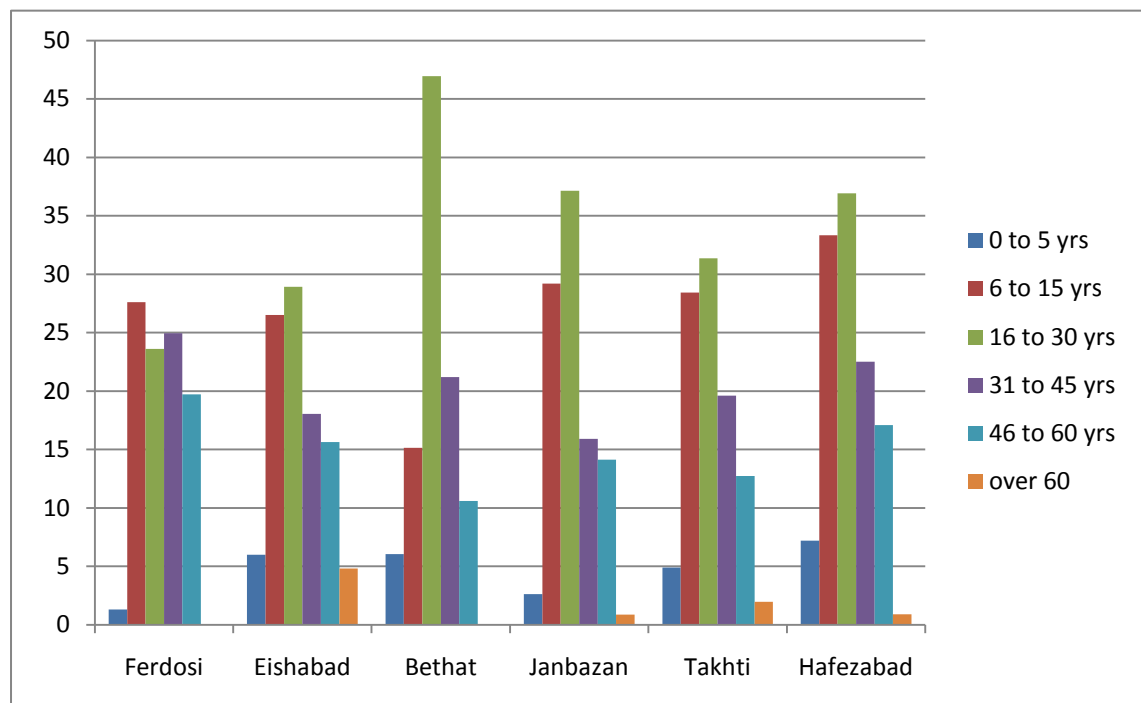


**Janbazan:** The majority of the households who live in Janbazan are small households of two, three or four members (Figure 6.4). The majority of its residents are between six to thirty years old (Figure 6.5). Its "Potential dependency rate (based on age)" is 0.49 and does not show an extreme among the districts. However, in terms of geographical distance of parents and wedded children it has the highest number of young households who share one land with their parents and has no parents and wedded children living as neighbours to each other on separate land.

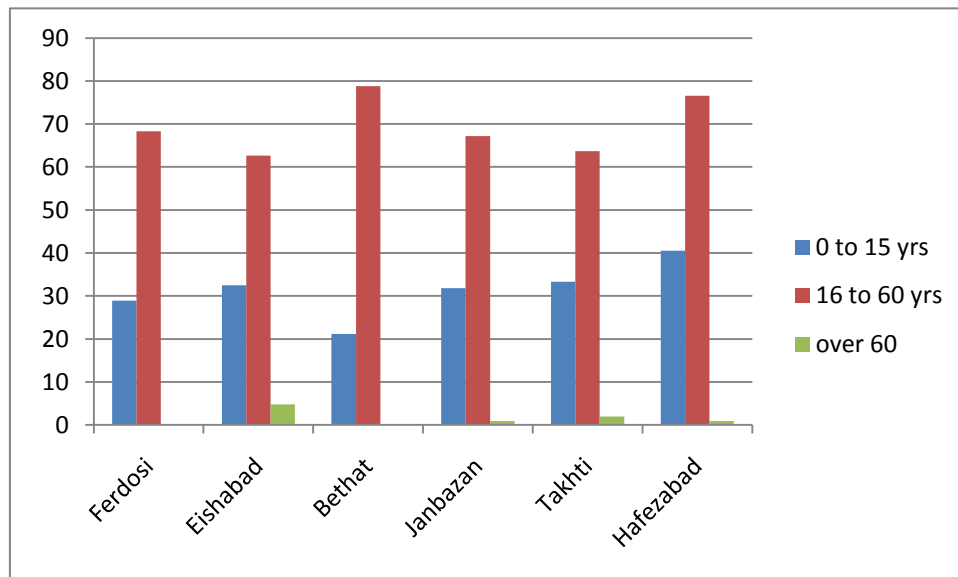
<sup>3</sup> In all figures, Bethat-Almahdi will be referred to as Bethat

**Takhti:** Most of the residents of Takhti district are households of two to five members (Figure 6.4). It has the highest "Potential dependency rate (based on age)" after Eishabad (Figure 6.7). In Takhti, residents were either not living with their relatives in one district or if they were, they were living on one piece of land (Figure 6.8).

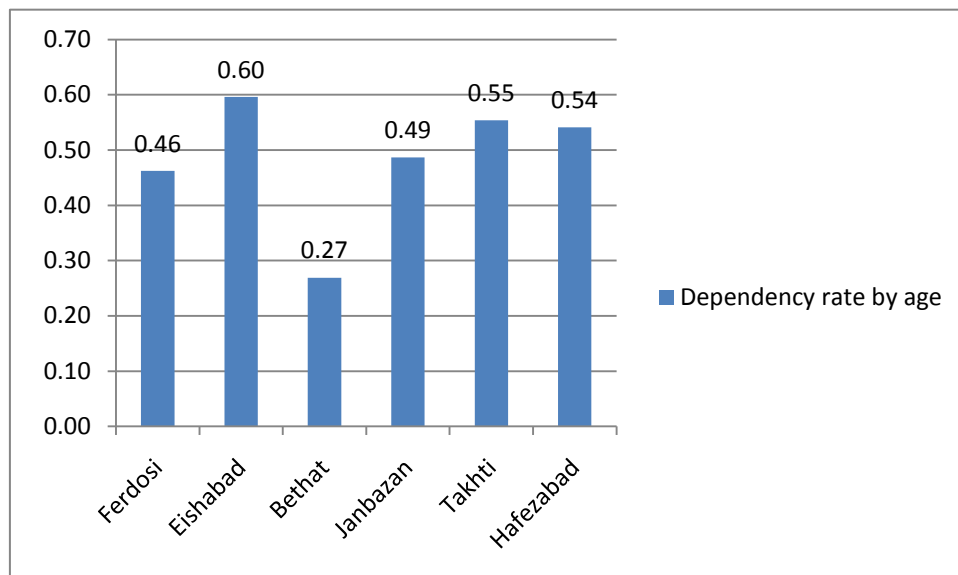
**Figure 6.5: Age distribution in the six districts of post-earthquake Bam, sample community, 2008 (in percentage)**



**Figure 6.6: Age distribution with a focus on the population from working age to pension age of post-earthquake Bam (in percentage %), sample community, 2008**



**Figure 6.7: Potential dependency rate (based on age)<sup>4</sup> of post-earthquake Bam, sample community, 2008**

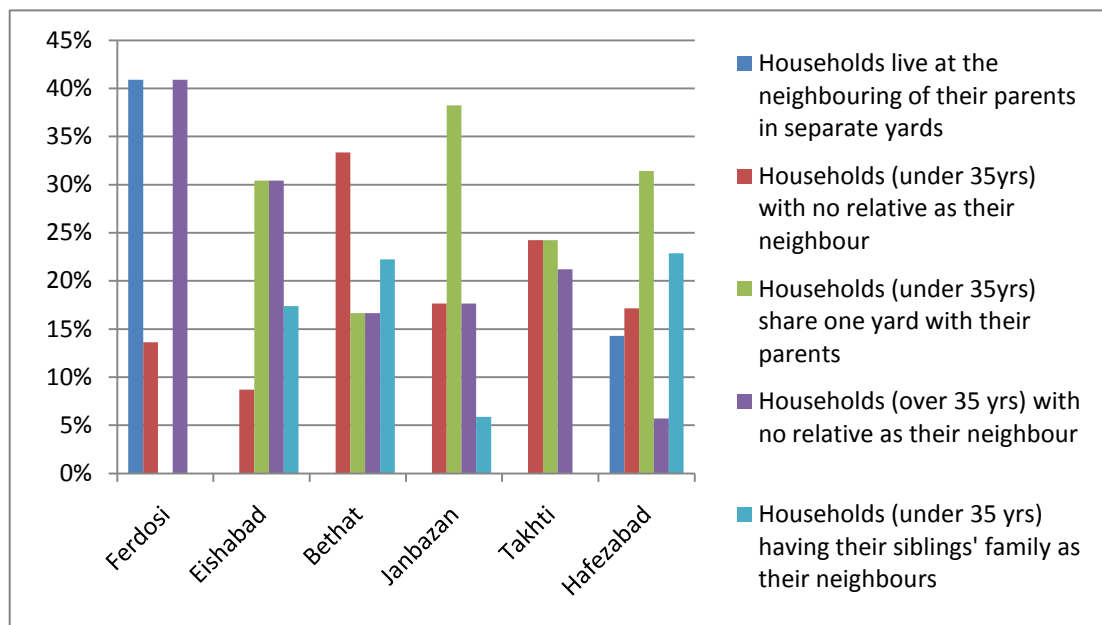


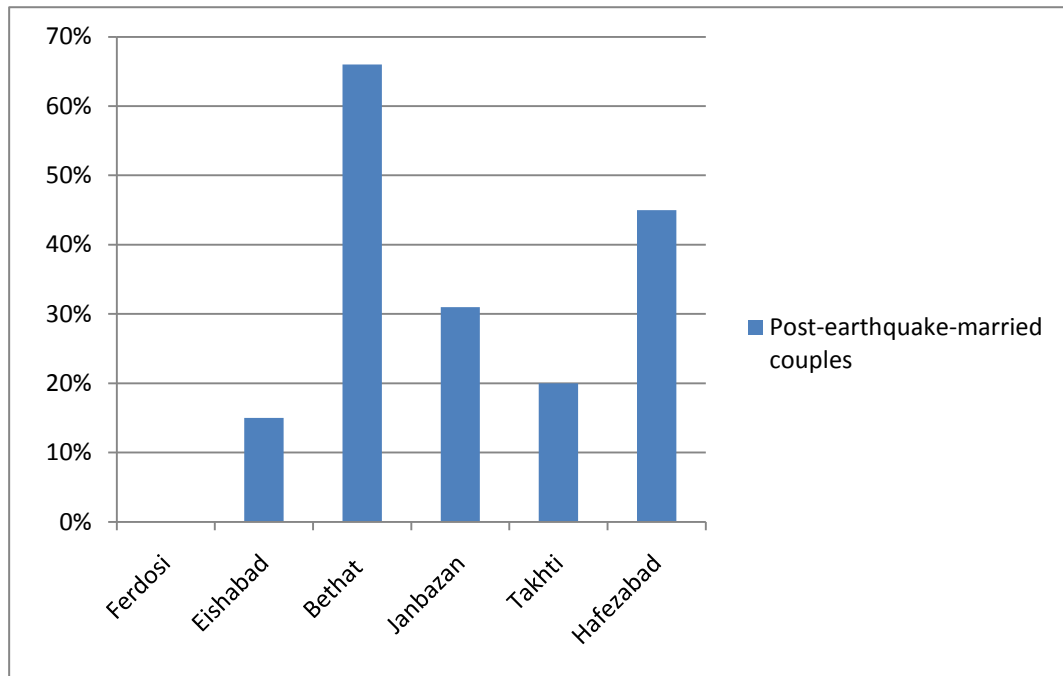
<sup>4</sup> This is calculated by dividing the number of people between sixteen and sixty (working age to pension age) to the sum of the number of people between zero and fifteen and over sixty.



**Hafezabad:** Figure 6.4 shows the households of Hafezabad are larger than the other five districts: It has the highest number of six-member households and the only district that accommodates more than seven member households. It has the highest number of under fifteen year-olds (Figure 6.6) and it has increased its potential dependency rate (based on age) (Figure 6.7). In Hafezabad, the number of households who were living within neighbouring proximity of their parents or siblings on separate lands was relatively high. It also has the lowest number of households over thirty five years old who did not have their children close by. Based on Figure 6.8 in Hafezabad, households were living in neighbouring sights from their relatives (as parents or siblings) either on one land or on different lands; this shows the strong family bonding ties of its residents. Moreover, after Bethat-Almahdi, Hafezabad has the highest number of post-earthquake-married households (Figure 6.9).

**Figure 6.8: Closeness of families post-earthquake Bam, sample community, in terms of geographical distance, 2008 (Q4 & 24, App.1)**



**Figure 6.9: Post-earthquake-married couples of the sample community, 2008**

Questions asked in this regard<sup>5</sup>:

- How many members does each household have?
- The occupation of each household's members:

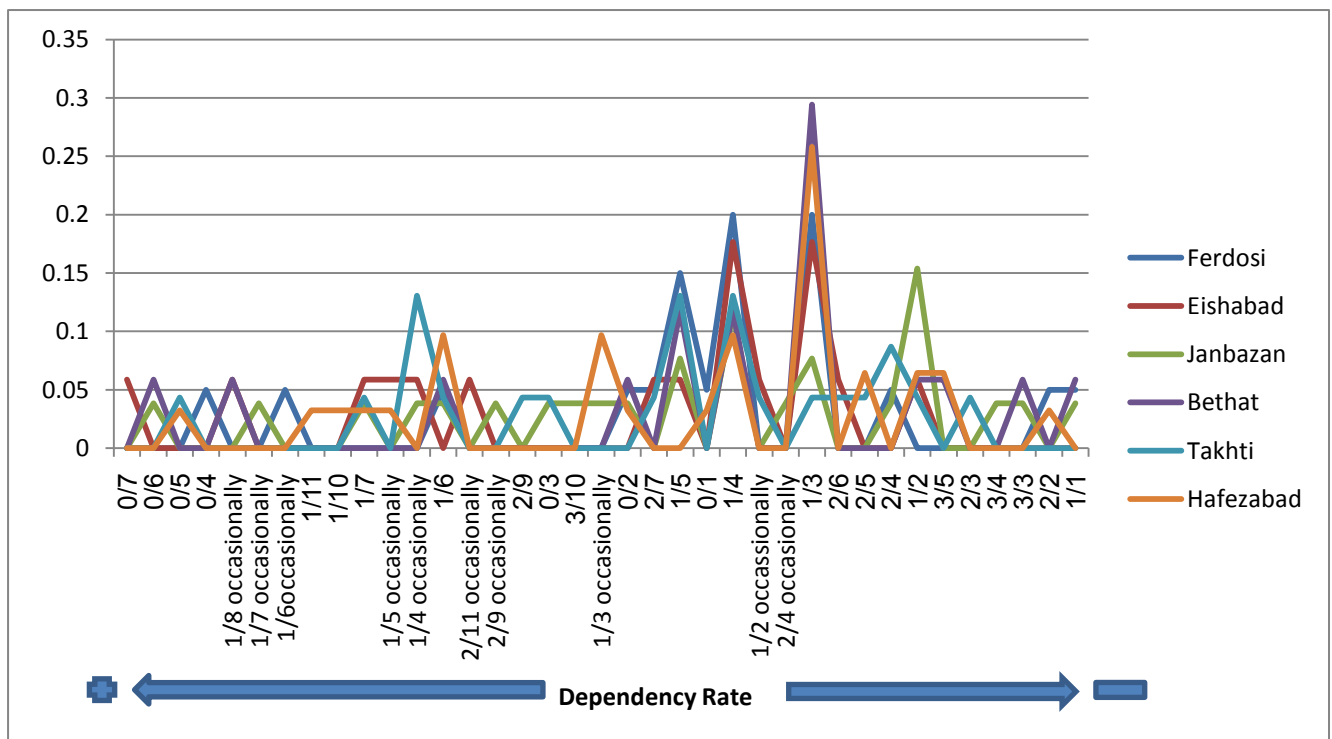
One of the ways to measure the poverty level of households is through measuring actual dependency rate; by that it means the number of members who earn money compared to the number of members who consume it in the household. In Figure 6.10, 2/7 for example, means two members of the household out of seven members who bring money into the household, and the families who are underemployed or do not have permanent income - clarified by “occasionally” working. In Figure 6.10, the right side means less dependency and consequently lower levels of poverty, and the left side means higher levels of poverty or a higher dependency rate.

Considering the dependency rate as an index for measuring poverty is not without challenge. Households with the same dependency rate may have different levels of

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1

income; two households with 1/5 dependency rate may have different income sources: One may be the owner of a prosperous date-garden, the other a retired teacher earning an under-average pension. There is also the problem of classifying dependency rates in a way to ease the analysis: It is not clear that a ten member household with one member who earns money from a permanent job is better off, or that a five member household with one member earns money from temporary jobs. These problems decrease the accuracy of the findings – but this is nothing new as measuring poverty levels has always been challenging.

**Figure 6.10: Actual Dependency Rate<sup>6</sup> of post-earthquake Bam, sample community, 2008 (Q 6 & 7, App. 1)**



As the figure shows, the dependency rate of the six wards are very close to each other. The graphs are most dense between 1/3 and occasionally 2/3. Among the wards, Janbazan has the greatest tendency towards low dependency rate. In 1/10 and

<sup>6</sup> Due to the high number of the dependency rate indicators, it became impossible to have districts in the X axis.

2/9 range there is the highest concentration of occasional workers in which Hafezabad, Takhti and Eishabad are most prominent. This confirms the household vulnerability of these areas.

**Table 6.2: Dependency Rate of the sample community**

District	Mode of the size of the households	Potential dependency rate	Family bonding ties (geographical distance of parents and married children)	Actual dependency rate	Post-earthquake-married households
<b>Ferdosi</b>	Medium (three to five-members)	Average	Intense (parents and children mostly live within neighbouring sights of each other on separate land)	Showing no extremes	None
<b>Eishabad</b>	Medium (three to four-members)	Highest	Very intense (high number of people sharing one yard with their parents)	High, high concentration of occasionally workers	Low
<b>Bethat-Almahdi</b>	Small	Lowest	Slight	Showing no extreme	Very High
<b>Janbazan</b>	Small	Medium	Very intense (has the highest number of young households who share one land with their parents)	Low	Medium
<b>Takhti</b>	Medium	High	Combination (residents either were not living with their relatives at one district or if they were, they were living on one piece of land)	High, high concentration of occasional workers	Medium
<b>Hafezabad</b>	Populated	High	Very intense (households living in neighbouring proximity to their parents or siblings either on one land or on different lands)	High	High

### 6.3.1.3 Access to Shelter, Transport, Governmental Social-financial support, Money Lenders and Employment

Questions asked in this regard<sup>7</sup>:

- Do you live in a prefabricated unit, built house, undestroyed house, or others?  
Number of rooms (except kitchen, bathroom, toilet)
- Do any of the households receive help from Imam Khomeini Relief Committee or Welfare Organization?
- Do you have access to personal vehicle?
- Who owns the land?
- To whom did it belong before the earthquake? How about the building?
- If an emergency came up that you need money, except for first-rate family, how many people are there that you can ask them to for borrow money and they are willing to help you?
- The occupation of each household's members before and after the earthquake:
- How have your weekend leisure time changed compared to before the earthquake?

**Ferdosi:** The rate of "built house to household" is the highest and the rates of under-construction to household and prefabricated unit to household is quite low. These factors support the relatively high ability of inhabitants to afford house reconstruction. Moreover, it has the least number of households in government financial support (*Behzisti* and *Emam Khomeini* Foundation) (Figure 6.13) and its room per person is the highest. In terms of bouncing back (albeit in terms of house reconstruction), Ferdosi shows the highest resilience. The residents of Ferdosi mostly said that they can not borrow money from anyone (Figure 6.14) but thought themselves in a better financial position than their friends and relatives. This response may be due to the high age factor of the inhabitants (not able to work) -

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 1

they recognise themselves as supporters rather than under support, considering that after Janbazan, it has the highest “more than five” answer. The residents of Ferdosi were among the most dissatisfied with their post-earthquake leisure time and stated they had better weekends before the earthquake (Figure 6.15).

It was good in Bam before the earthquake, the city was alive. For our leisure time we used to travel around the city by car, there was a cinema before, but now there is nothing. (A resident from Ferdosi, 2008)

**Eishabad:** Shows the lowest resiliency in terms of bouncing back regarding house reconstruction. Its rate of built-houses to household and the rate of built-house to a piece of land remain the lowest. It also has the highest rate in seven-member households, its percentage of people still living in prefabricated unit is high (second after Janbazan), and the rate of young households living apart from their parents independently is the lowest. Eishabad has the highest rate of unemployment as well as the number of households being helped by government financial support organisations (*Behzisti* and *Emam Khomeini Foundation*<sup>8</sup>) (Figure 6.13). The number of members benefiting from the use of a personal car is the least among the districts. The number of persons per room is the highest among the six districts. The answer by the residents to how many people they have access to ask for money was mostly “no one”. Eishabad has a zero “more than five” answer. This can be indexed to highlight their financial insecurity. Most of the residents did not feel change in their weekend leisure quality (Figure 6.15), they mostly stated they spent their weekends at home as they did before the earthquake.

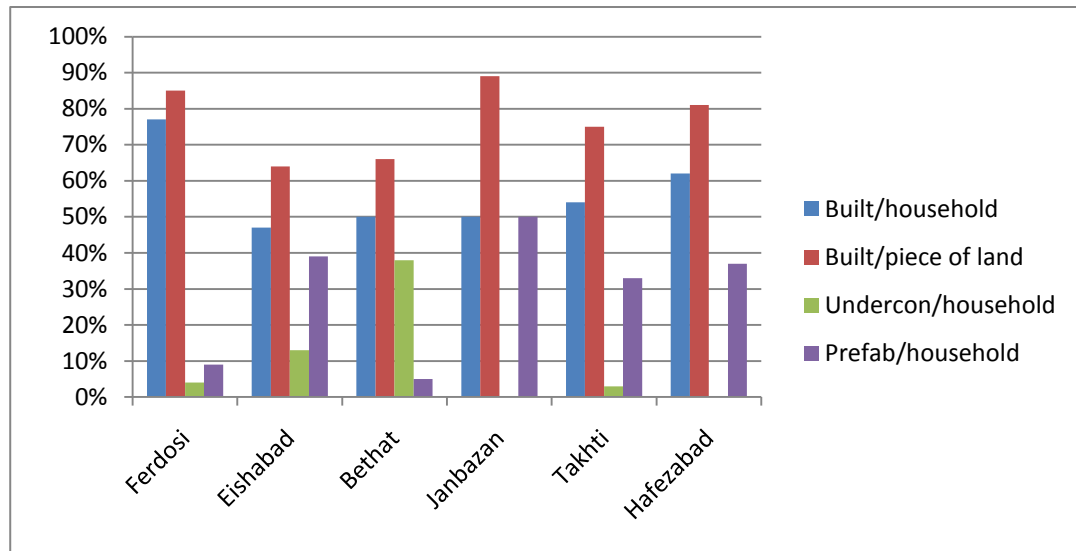
We used to live in one house with my father-in-law and brother-in-law and his wife. After the earthquake, the loan was enough to build a small house for my brother-in-law after the death of my father-in-law. Our application for a loan was denied because we were told the land is too small to accommodate

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<sup>8</sup> In the Figure, the Emam Khomeini Foundation is mentioned as a committee.

two buildings, so we live in prefabricated unit on the same land with my brother-in-law's family. (One of the residents of Eishabad, 2008)

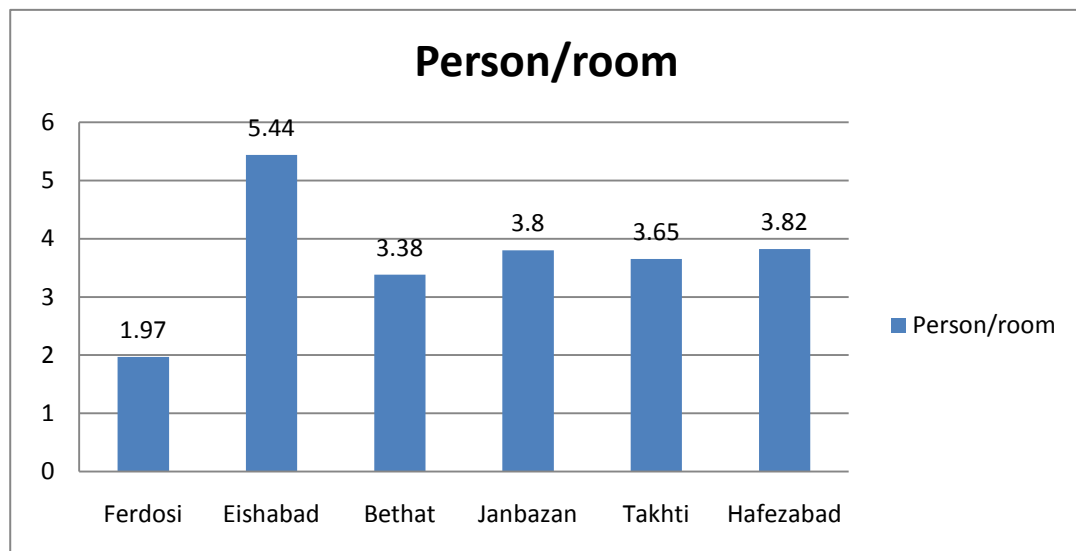
**Figure 6.11: Rate of Built-Houses post-earthquake Bam, sample community, 2008 (Q1, App.1)**



**Bethat-Almahdi:** Bethat-Almahdi has the highest rate of under-construction houses to households and its rate of pre-fabricated units to household is the lowest. Most residents of Bethat-Almahdi have a car (Figure 6.12). The numbers of unemployed people who benefit from government financial services is also relatively high (Figure 6.13). Comparing this data with Table 6.2, it can be concluded that Bethat-Almahdi has the highest rate of three-member households, the highest number of "between sixteen to sixty", the highest rate of households living with no relatives in their neighbourhood, and the highest number of post-earthquake-wedded households. Its rate of young households living in neighbouring proximity to relatives (mostly brothers and sisters) is second after Hafezabad. One possibility for these outcomes could be that the district which is one of the most affected districts in Bam greatly changed its identity after the earthquake. Former inhabitants have mostly died and lands were passed on to the heirs. Heirs either built new houses on the land beside each other or sold the land to young families. Figure 6.11 supports this result since Bethat-Almahdi has the highest rate of "under-construction to household" (since

inheritance process and selling the land is a time consuming process and consequently postponed the reconstruction). The answer by the residents to how many people they have access to for money was mostly "no one" (Figure 6.24). It is possible that the answer may be a consequence of being new to the area and being distant from previous social networks - from whom they could borrow money. Weekend leisure quality remained mostly the same (Figure 6.15).

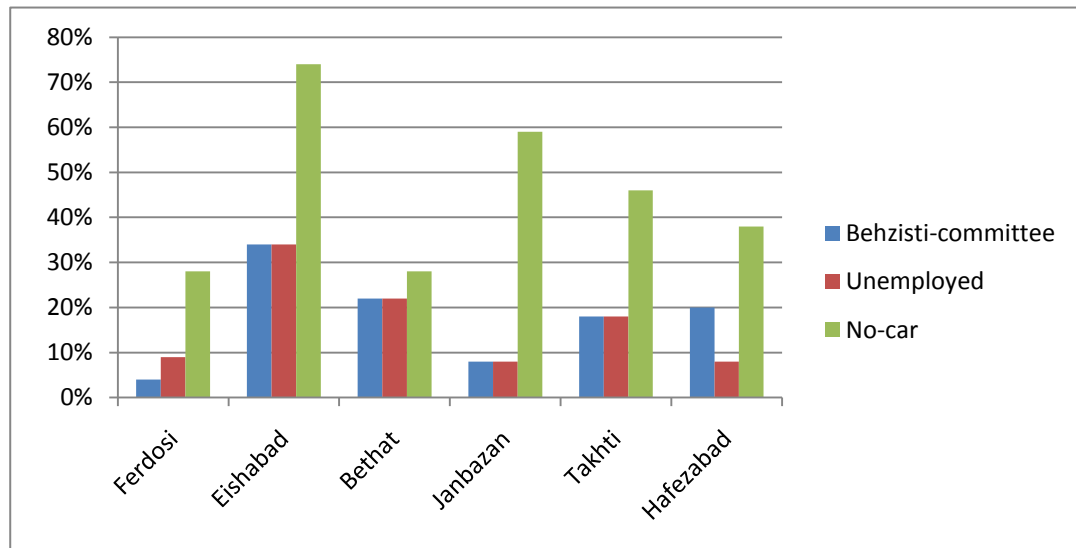
**Figure 6.12: Person per room post-earthquake in Bam, sample community, 2008 (Q 2 & 6, App.1)**



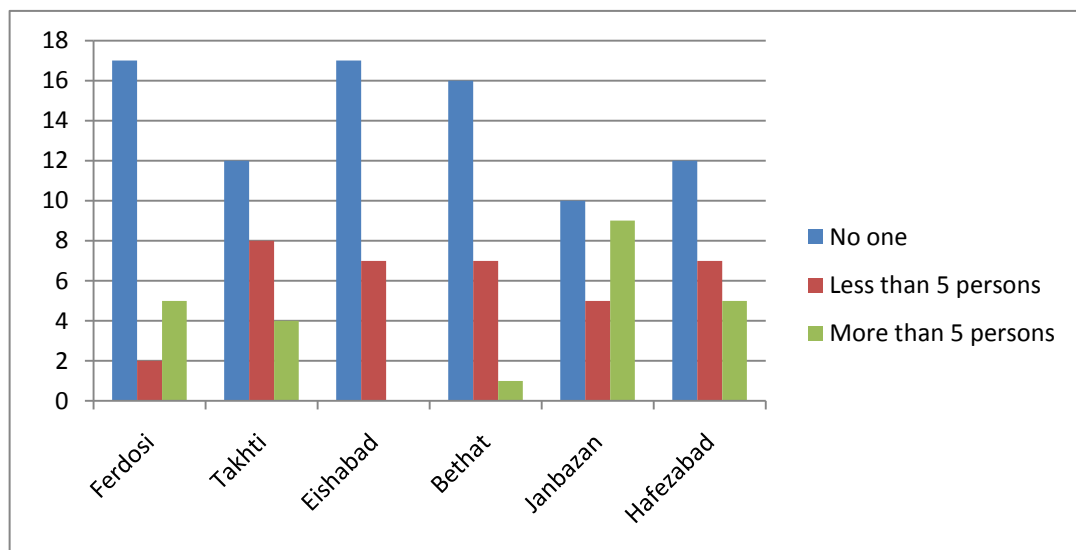
**Janbazan:** Comparing the highest rate of people living in prefabricated unit in the area to Table 6.2, it can be concluded that the area is ranked first in terms of parents and married son/daughter living on the same piece of land. While one household has built its house, the other is living in prefabricated unit. The residents show more confidence in terms of access to a social network that they can ask money from since Janbazan has the highest rate of "more than five persons" and the lowest number of "no one" answers to the question - how many people can you ask to borrow money in times of difficulty (Figure 6.14).



**Figure 6.13: Deprivation, sample community, post earthquake Bam, 2008**  
, (Q9, App.1)



**Figure 6.14: People to Borrow money from, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008, (Q 19, App.1)**

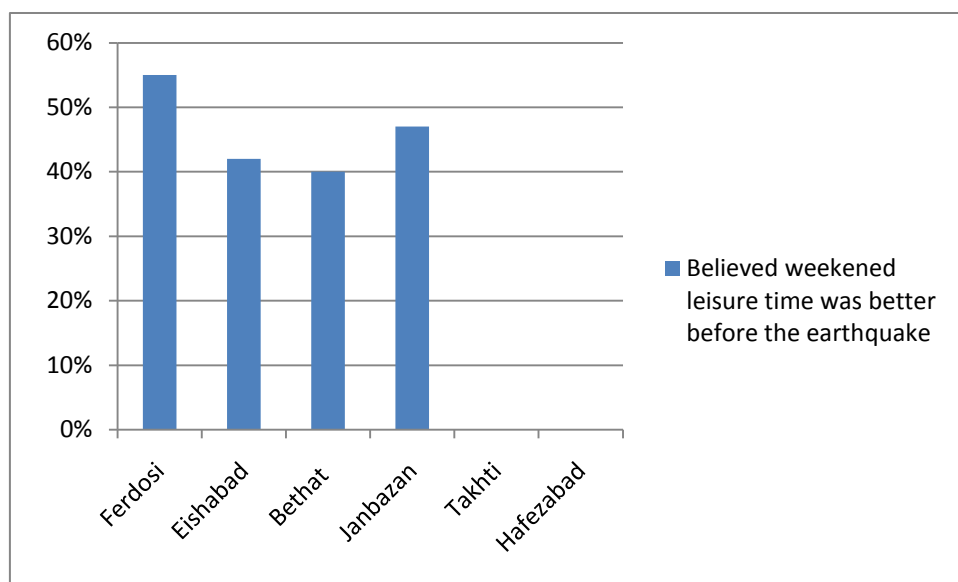


**Takhti:** Takhti does not show any extremes in its data. The number of residents having access to a car is average among the districts, along with the number of unemployed people and people who benefit from government financial support. The

number of built houses per household and per piece of land are also average among the districts. Its person per room rate is also average.

**Hafezabad:** In Hafezabad, the rate of person per room is high, albeit not as extreme as Eishabad. There were no underconstruction houses in the area: Houses were either built or people were still living in prefabricated units (Figure 6.11). This may be an indicator of informal dwellers because if the lands had formal deeds they would be inherited by the heirs and it would be time for the heir to construct new buildings in the area. However, if the land title was unknown, no one could claim for a loan for land reconstruction. If this was the case in Hafezabad, this might indicate that newcomers to the city had chosen that area for its informal setting as no one would claim those lands.

**Figure 6.15: Change in weekend leisure quality, sample community, post earthquake Bam, 2008<sup>9</sup>, (Q 23, App.1)**



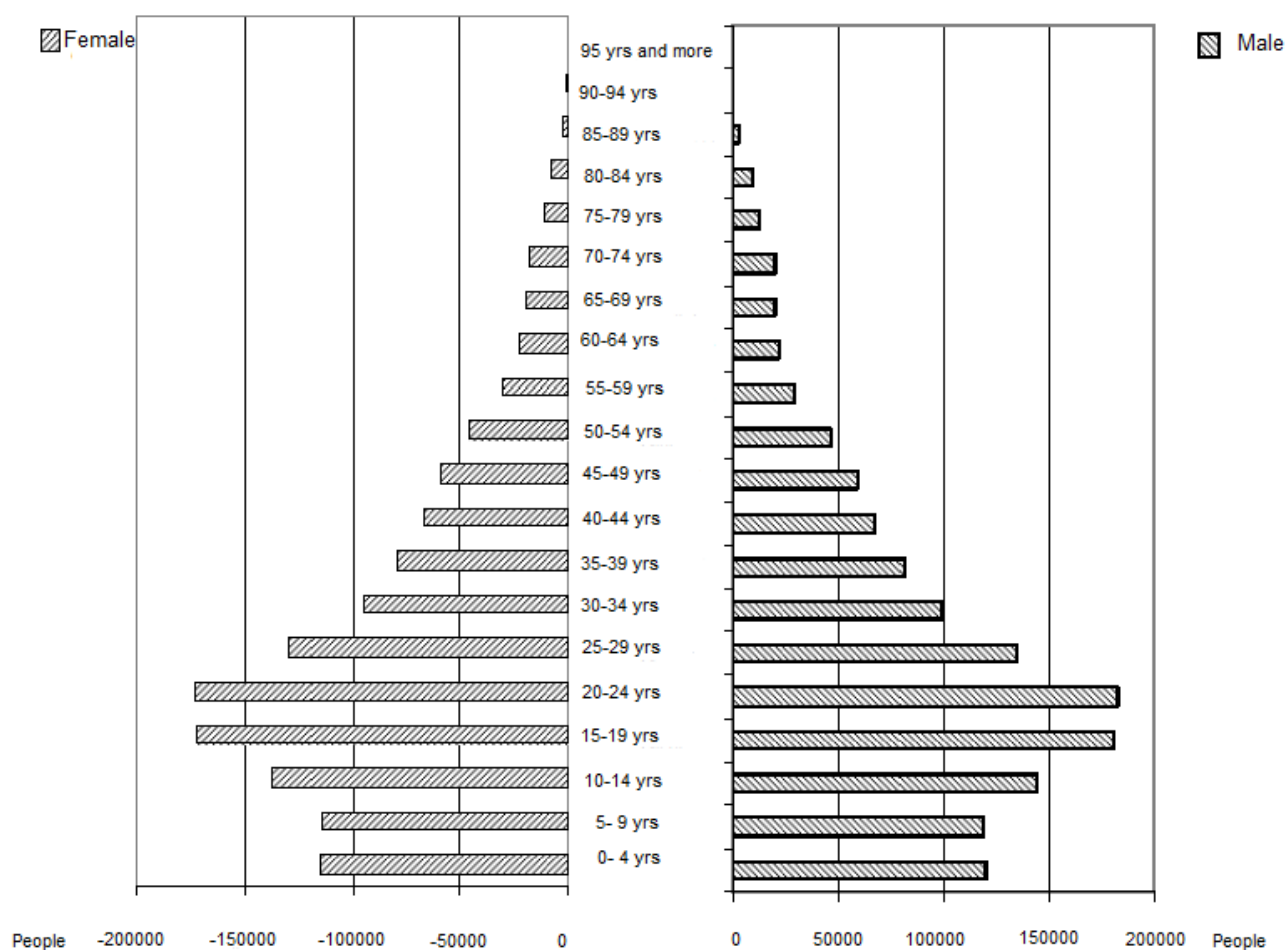
<sup>9</sup> This question was added later in the questionnaires; hence Takhti and Hafezabad as the first two sample areas have no data in this regard.

**Table 6.3: Access to shelter, transport and financial resources in the sample community**

District	Built houses/households	Pre-fabs/households	Underconstruction household	Person per room	Unemployment	Access to car	Using Governmental financial support system	Access to people for asking money	Change in leisure quality
Ferdosi	High	Low	Very low	Low	Low	High	Very low	No need	Mostly said yes
Eishabad	Low	High	Average	Very high	High	Very low	High	Low	Some said yes
Bethat-Almahdi	Average	Very low	High	Average	Average	High	Average	Low	Some said yes
Janbazan	Average	Very high	None	Average	Low	Low	Low	High	Many said yes
Takhti	Average	Average	Very low	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	—
Hafezabad	Good	Average	None	Average	Low	Average	Average	Average	—

### 6.3.2 Population structure of the sample community

Based on the questionnaires, the population pyramid of the samples is provided. The reason for analysing the population pyramid is to study if factors such as age and gender have any influence on the resilience of the districts and have any relation with other factors like dependency rate, access to shelter, and trust.

**Figure 6.16: Kerman's Population Pyramid (1) 2006**

Source: National Census 2006

Figure 6.17: Kerman Population Pyramid (2) 2006

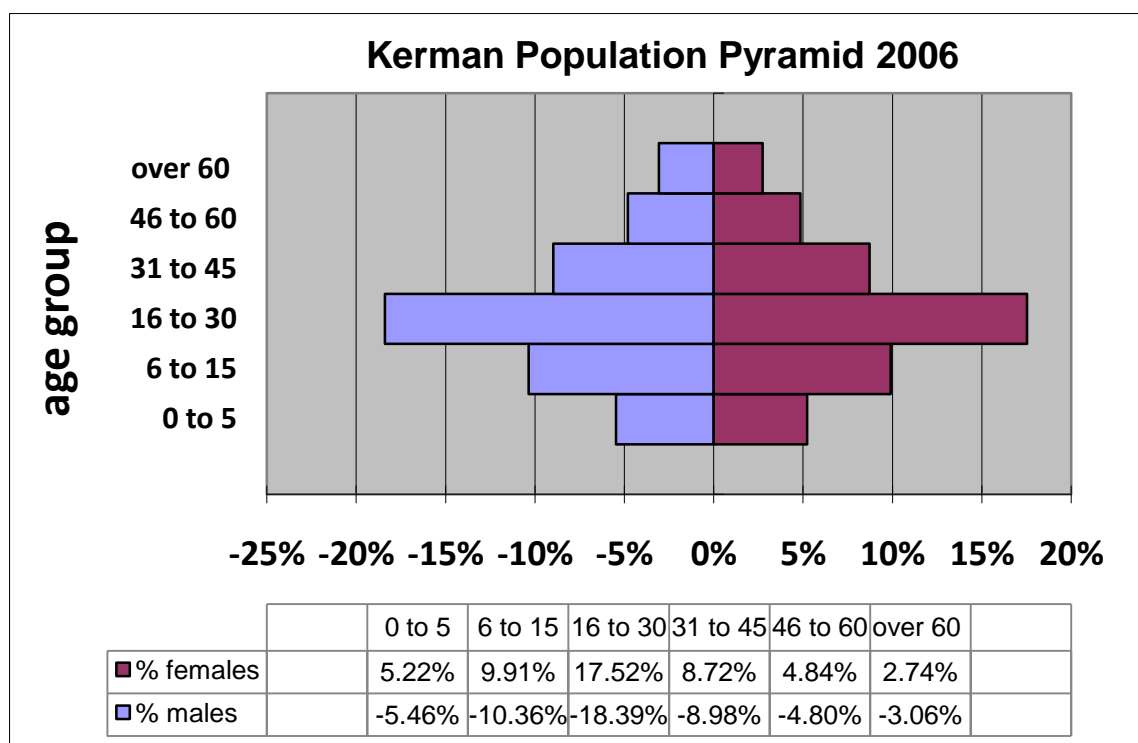
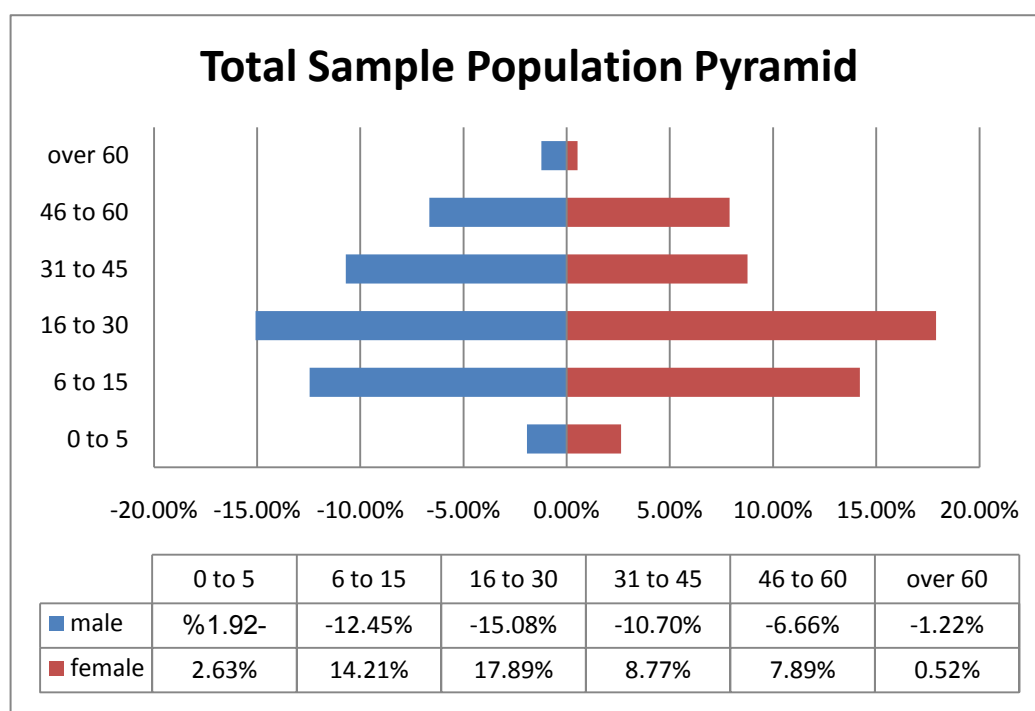


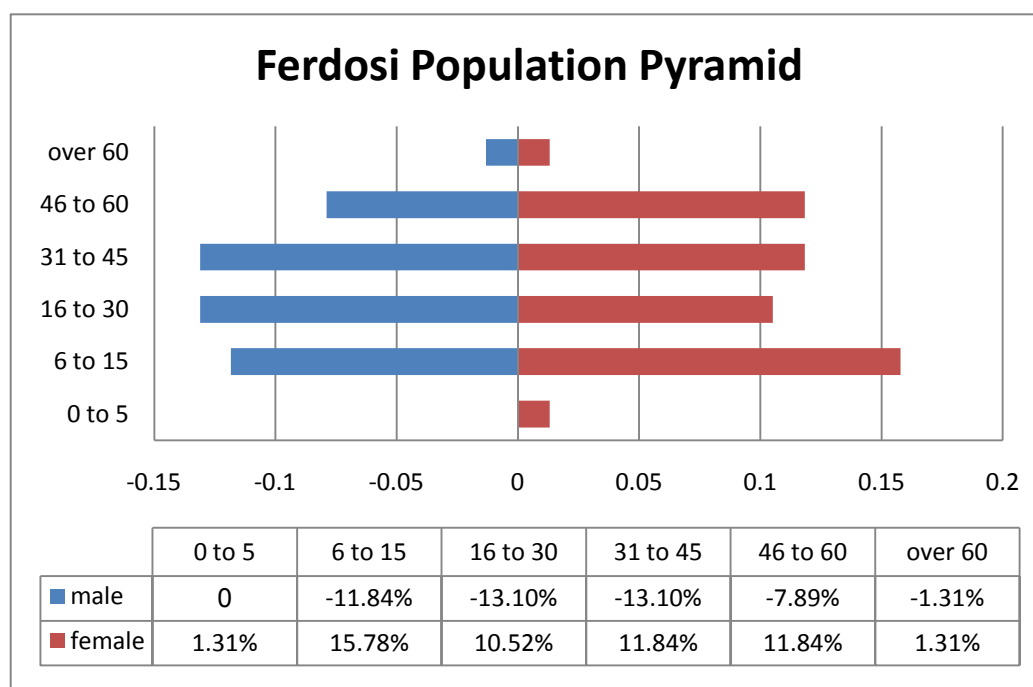
Figure 6.18: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008



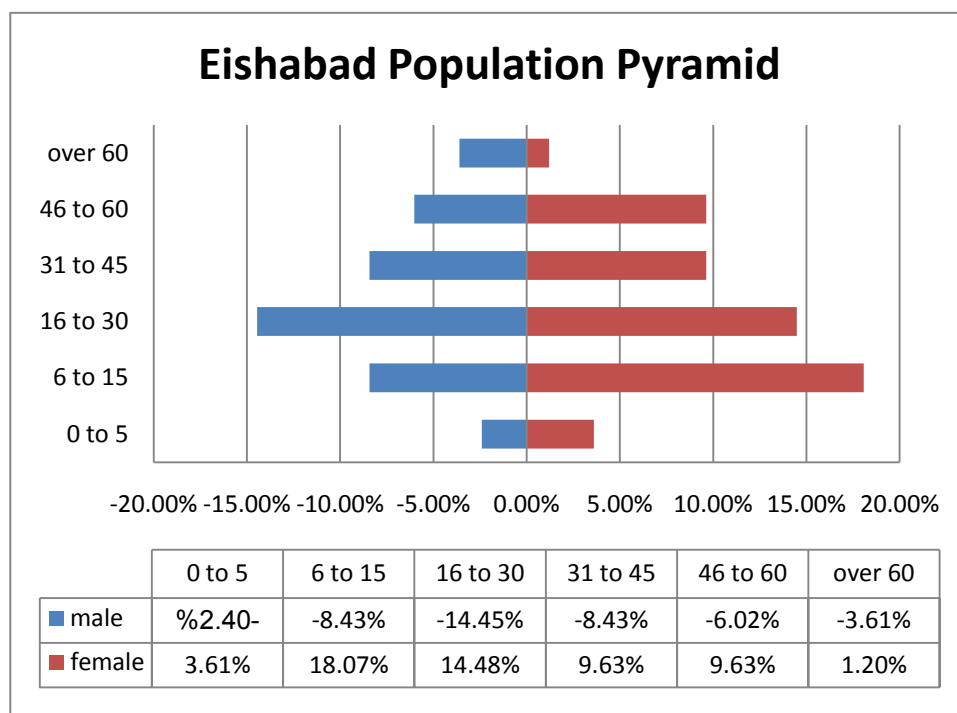
The sample reads with the province pyramid in mind because the most populated category is between sixteen and thirty year olds. However, children under five are considerably low. To compare the Ferdosi with the sample and Kerman's pyramid, Ferdosi's population are almost equally distributed in different categories except that the number of children under five is very little.

Eishabad's population is mostly female and less mature than Ferdosi.

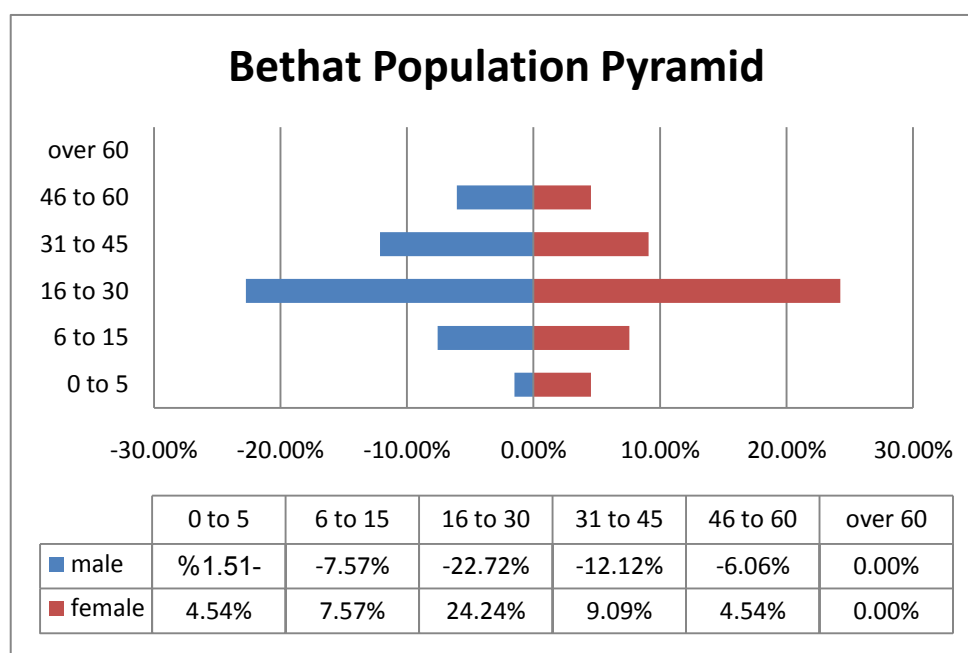
**Figure 6.19: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008, Ferdosi**



**Figure 6.20: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008, Eishabad**



**Figure 6.21: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008, Bethat-Almahdi**



In the population pyramid for Bethat-Almahdi, the young population between sixteen and thirty is considerably high. As mentioned perviously, one explanation for this could be that the area has become home to the young couples who are building new properties in the district. Gender distribution is almost equal.

In Janbazan, the six to thirty population is considerably higher than the over thirty population. The district shows the most gender equallity among all of the six wards.

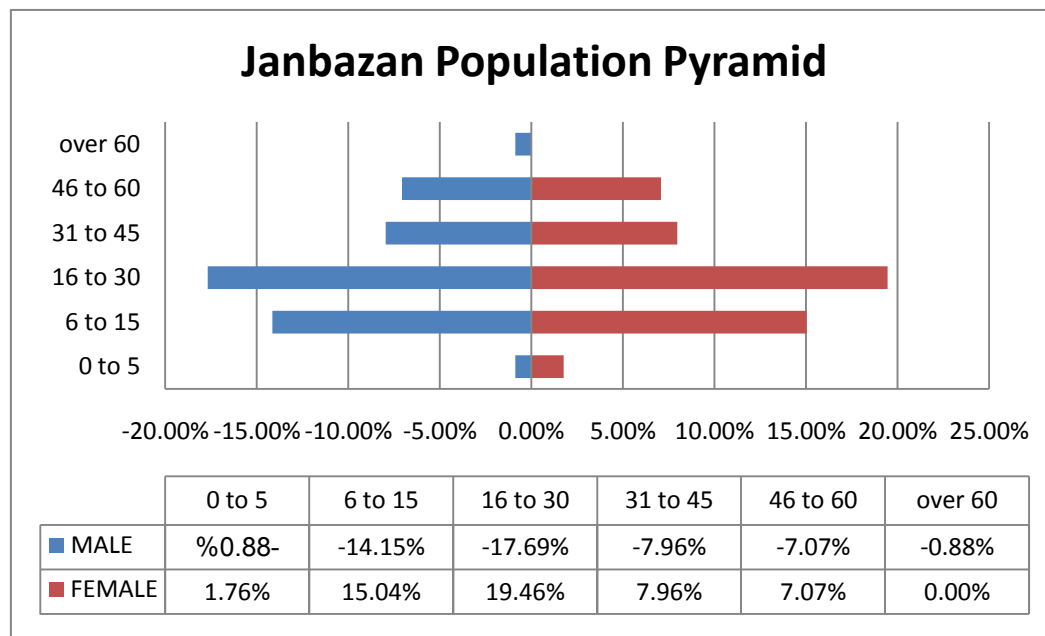
In Takhti, the female population between thirty and forty five is considerably lower than their male counterparts.

In Hafezabad, the most noteworthy issue is the gender inequality between six and fifteen year olds; young boys attend school at a considerably higher rate than their female counterparts. One reason for this could be due to the social problems of the area. In particualr, families with young girls preferred not to reside in the area due to social concerns regarding their daughters' safety.

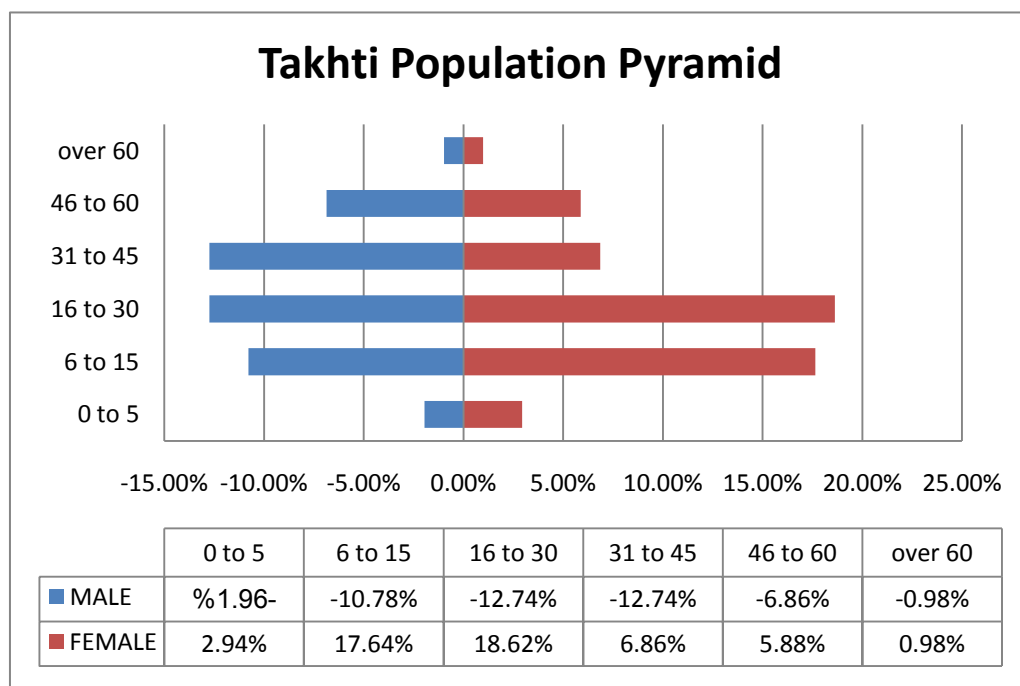
The population pyramid reveals no abnormal expansion; it is almost in accordance to the province's population pyramid. One noticeable fact is that Bethat's pyramid shows a considerable expansion in the the young population between sixteen and thirty year olds. This supports the assumption that Bethat-Almahdi is developing new characteristics since the earthquake by accomodating mostly young residents. It should be noted that the results are merely sample results and drawing conclusions based on a generalisation of the sample to whole wards is inevitably risky.



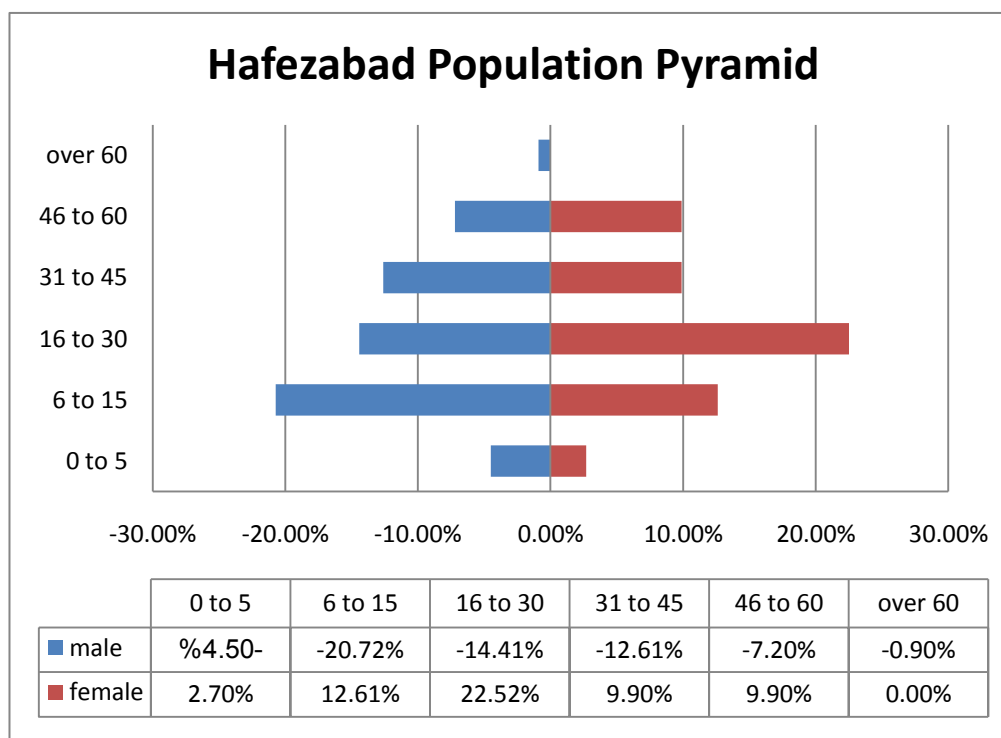
**Figure 6.22: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008, Janbazan**



**Figure 6.23: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008, Takhti**



**Figure 6.24: Sample Community Population Pyramid, post earthquake Bam, 2008, Hafezabad**



### 6.3.3 Trust and Communication in the six districts

Questions asked in this regard<sup>10</sup>:

- Do you know your neighbours?
- Do you think that the neighbourhood people will help each other in difficult circumstances? Has this issue changed compared to before the earthquake? (If you have come to this place after the earthquake, is it different compared to the previous neighbourhood?)
- Do you think that most of the neighbourhood people can be trusted? Why do you think like that? Did you think like this before
- How your trustfulness has changed to the following people compared to the time before the earthquake?

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1

Through the questionnaire survey, residents were asked about their levels of trust towards their neighbours; to the new inhabitants of Bam. They were required to compare the situation with and before the earthquake. The intention was to study the influence of the earthquake and impact of the reconstruction on the levels of trust, security and belonging.

***Ferdosi:*** The residents of Ferdosi show the least change in their trust towards their neighbours. This is not surprising since the district has the highest rate of relatives living in close proximity to their neighbours. They also have the highest aged households, which means its inhabitants had more time to communicate with their neighbours compared to younger households in other districts.

***Bethat-Almahdi:*** The results of Bethat-Almahdi district regarding the neighbour questions, supports the idea of the area being transformed into a new district with new inhabitants. Its inhabitants are mostly unfamiliar with their neighbours (more than fifty per cent of the inhabitants) and consequently have a low rate of trust compared to the other districts.

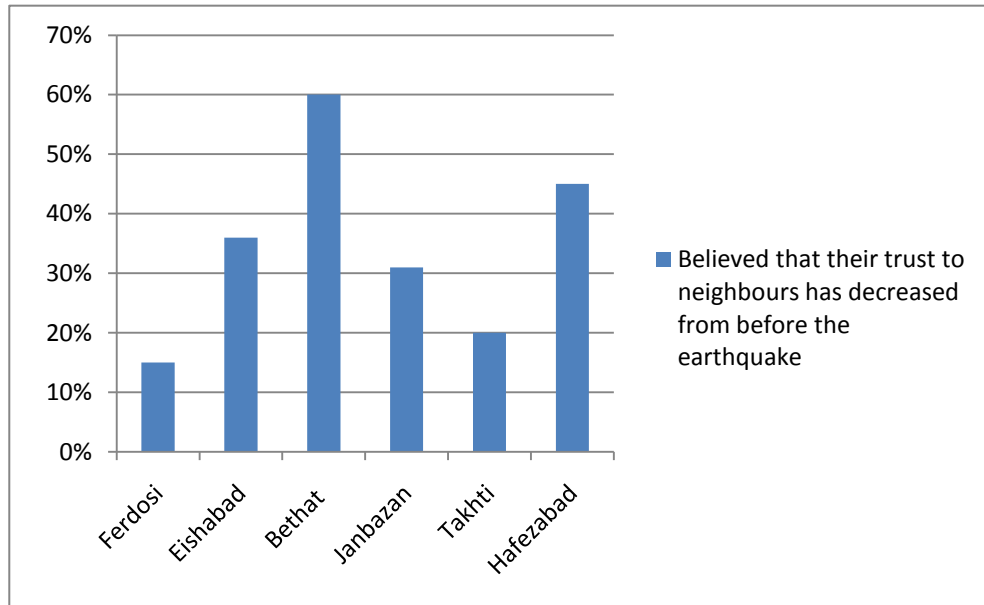
***Hafezabad:*** The residents of Hafezabad also distrusted their neighbours and believed they did not know their neighbours and in many cases, newcomers to Hafezabad stated that in previous living areas people were more familiar with each other.

Hafezabad's inhabitants felt isolated from their surrounding communities and neighbours. Despite the fact that the area is second in terms of the numbers of relatives living on neighbouring land (after Ferdosi), the households did not trust their neighbours. One fact worth considering is that the area has a bad reputation for drug dealing; therefore interviewees may prefer to show themselves unacquainted with other members of the district to present themselves clean from drug dealing.

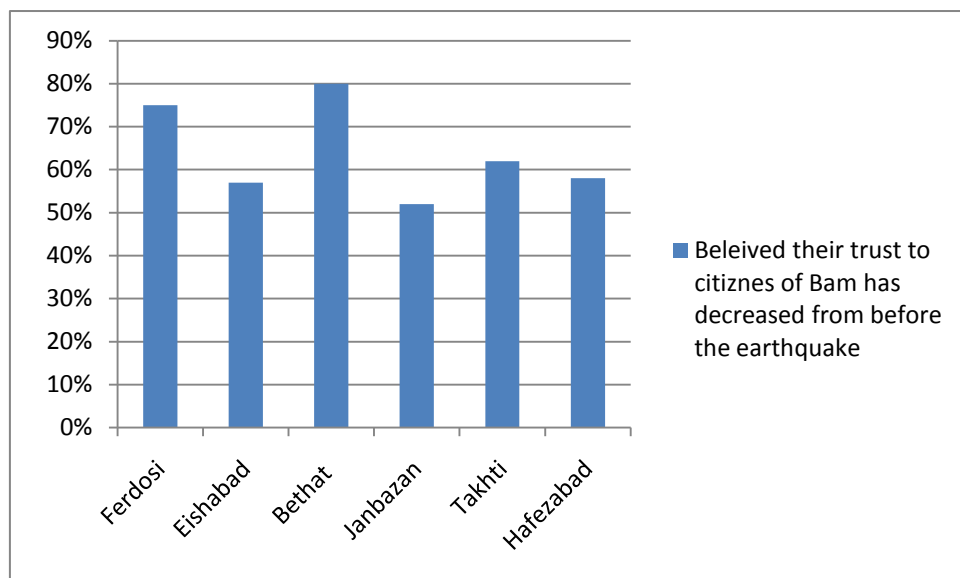
**Takhti:** Takhti's data shows the trust of residents towards their neighbours and that it has changed very slightly since before the earthquake. They mostly stated that their neighbours are the same ones as before and that the area has not changed much.

**Eishabad** and **Janbazan** do not show any special characteristics in this regard. However, Eishabad as being the most deprived area along with Hafezabad was expected to show some especial characteristic and difference with other districts. Compared to the other districts, the neighbourhood ties of Eishabad were apparent by observing the residents rather than from the answers the residents gave to the survey questions. For example, inhabitants accompanied the researcher to contact neighbours - both considering it as an opportunity to say hello to the neighbour, and to create awareness among the neighbours of the questionnaire process. At times, the group discussions developed naturally - it was obvious that bonding ties were high. However, it also became apparent that the level of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was high. Most interviewees with trauma were observed in Eishabad; many people crying after each question and women blaming themselves for their children becoming unruly as a result of their depression which was prevalent among these communities. Not benefiting from financial capital, their most valued capital was their bonding ties. The loss of financial capital was therefore not that harsh to them since they had become accustomed to it even before the earthquake. However, loss of their loved ones was a greater catastrophe to these people compared with other areas. As one of the inhabitants said "anything is tolerable except for the loss of your loved ones".

**Figure 6.25: Change (decrease) in trusting Neighbours, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008, (Q 25, 27, App.1)**



**Figure 6.26: Trust to the citizens, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008, (Q 27, App.1)**



In terms of change towards trust by the citizens (Figure 6.26) the outcomes are suprisingly contrary. *Eishabad* and *Janbazan* have the least change while *Bethat-Almahdi* and *Ferdosi* have the highest decrease in the levels of trust. In Janbazan and Bethat-Almahdi, answers were mostly followed by claims that the city got filled with newcomers (*Narmashiris*) who destroyed Bam's solidarity. Residents of Eishabad, on the other hand, showed more sympathy to the post-earthquake Bamis. In many interviews, people stated that they were unable to care for each other any more because they were suffering from their own difficulties. The high rate of distrust towards other citizens in Bam of Bathat, once again confirms the unfamiliarity of its inhabitants with the city.

**Table 6.4: Change in Trust since the earthquake of the sample community**

<b>Districts</b>	<b>Change in Trust towards Neighbours</b>	<b>Change in Trust towards Residents of Bam</b>
<b>Ferdosi</b>	Little change	Highly decreased
<b>Eishabad</b>	Average	Decreased
<b>Bethat-Almahdi</b>	Highly decreased	Highly decreased
<b>Janbazan</b>	Average	Decreased
<b>Takhti</b>	Little change	Decreased
<b>Hafezabad</b>	Decreased	Decreased

### 6.3.4 Networking and Social Gatherings

Questions asked in this regard<sup>11</sup>:

- How many times did you have guests in the past two months? How has it changed compared to before the earthquake?
- How many times have you gone to a party in the past two months? How has it changed compared to before the earthquake?

Figure 6.27 shows the change in private social gatherings in Bam since the earthquake. Overall, most of the respondents declared a decrease in the numbers of private social gatherings since the earthquake. Households stated the reasons as: A decrease in the number of relatives (some of them were killed in the earthquake and some migrated); financial deficits after the earthquake; depression; and not being able to leave the house empty due to insecurity and the threat of robbery. There were some households who confirmed an increase in the number of gatherings, due to a desire to see each other more and reduce the pain of the disaster. People in this category belonged either to the Ferdosi area which is the most affluent or Hafezabad which, along with Ferdosi, had the highest rate of families living in close proximity to their relatives. In some cases, the interviewees mentioned that despite the decrease in the number of gatherings since the earthquake, the form of gatherings has changed more towards close relatives and siblings rather than distant ones. According to one of the residents of Ferdosi:

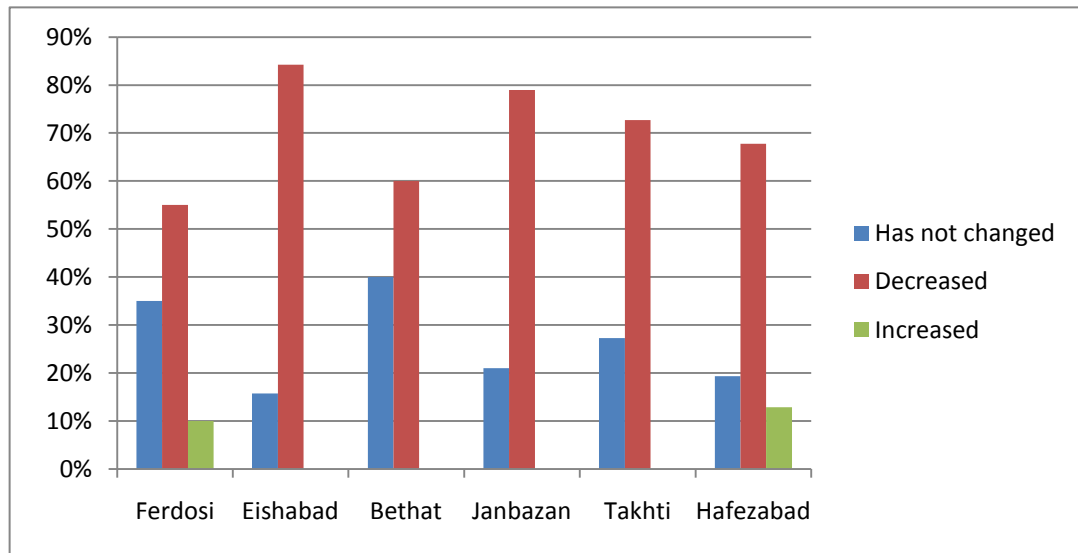
Before the earthquake we used to gather at each other's houses for Quran readings but now I have no idea about the city - everything has changed. I feel I will get lost if I leave the house.

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 1



**Figure 6.27: Changes to private social gatherings since the earthquake, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008, (Q 31 & 32, App.1)**



Through the data collected on Bethat-Almahdi, Ferdosi and Eishabad, some characteristics of the wards can be extracted: *Bethat-Almahdi* is the ward whose residents felt the least change in their private social gatherings. One reason could be that the residents are young couples who had started their social life recently, or the earthquake affected their social relationships the least (considering the fact that Bethat-Almahdi has the highest rate of newly wedded households among the districts). *Ferdosi* is the other ward that shows the least decrease in gatherings and even some households confirmed an increase. As mentioned before, this could be due to the affluence of the residents to be able to afford gatherings. *Eishabad*, on the other hand, shows a substantial decrease in gatherings. One reason for this could be the deprivation of the residents. Eishabad was one of the most affected areas in contrast to Bethat-Almahdi which still has its pre-earthquake residents and has the least young independent households. It is also one of the areas with the most dependant households who live in one yard - hence less people feel the need for outdoor visits.

### 6.3.5 Sense of having power in affecting their surroundings:

The social structure in Bam has changed, a huge number of Bamis died, a large number of new residents are from other cities. The city is full of construction labourers who have come from different parts of Iran. There is no social trust anymore. I feel powerless in governing my city; everything is in the hands of central and local government. Nobody wants my opinion (One of the Residents of Takhti district, 2008).

To figure out how responsible residents feel about their surroundings, three questions were designed<sup>12</sup>: 1. Have you worked with others in your neighbourhood to do something for the benefit of the community in the past four years (since the earthquake)? 2. How much impact do you think you have in making Bam a better place to live? 3. Have you sent any grievance letters to any organisation in last four years, and if so, to which organisation?

Answers to the first question are shown in Figure 6.28. *Bethat-Almahdi* highlights the least cooperation between neighbours. This shows the lack of closeness between neighbours which again backs the assumption that Bethat-Almahdi accommodates mostly new comers. *Janbazan* shows the most cooperation and the most independent couples (actual dependency rate figure). It also has the most completed buildings per piece of land among the wards (Figure 6.11). Most young couples live in prefabricated units and share yards with their siblings. Being young and in need, increases their sense of cooperation – because they want to improve their situation. Hafezabad and Ferdosi have the highest rate of neighbours being parents and children, but *Hafezabad* reveals considerable difference in terms of cooperation than Ferdosi (Figure 6.28). One reason for this could be IBC's networking project in Hafezabad which will be discussed in the next chapter. *Eishabad* has a low cooperation rate; probably due to a high rate of ward deprivation which has increased their resilience and tolerance to harsh conditions. Despite the fact that

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 1

figures show low cooperation in submitting any neighbourhood projects, at the time of filling in the questionnaire, neighbouring bonds were so strong that entire households often accompanied the researcher to contact their neighbours. This increased the levels of trust between the researcher and the interviewees.

**Figure 6.28: Neighbourhood co-operation, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008 (in percentage), (Q 28-30, App.1)**

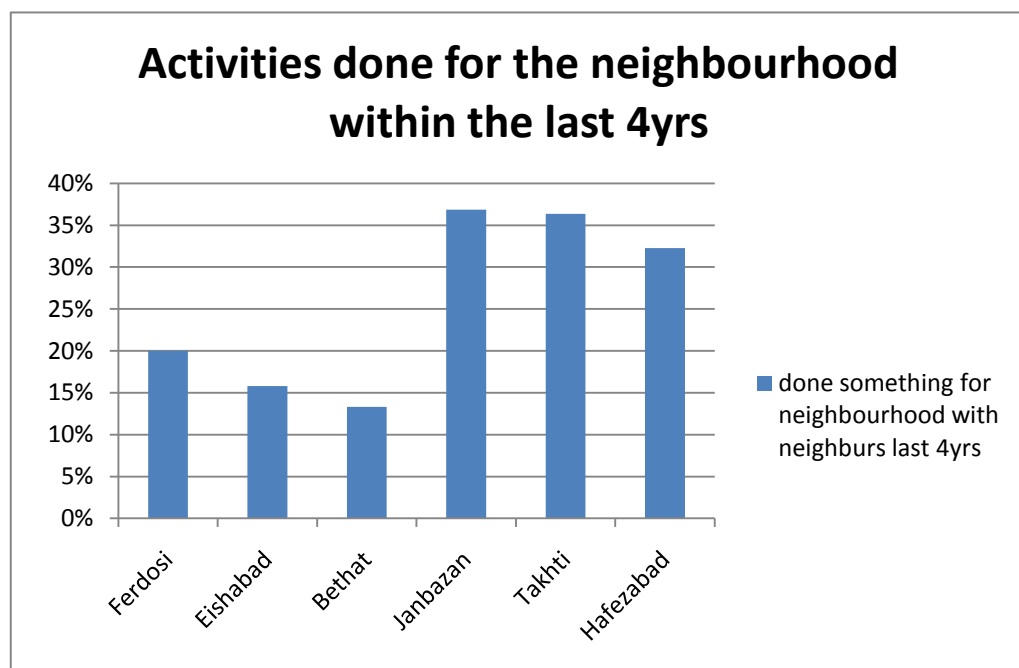
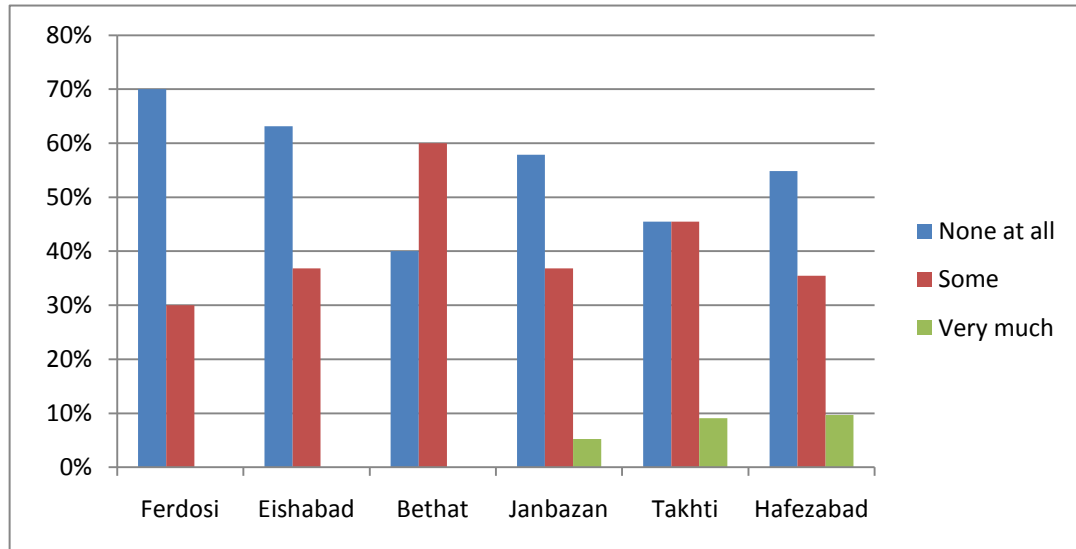


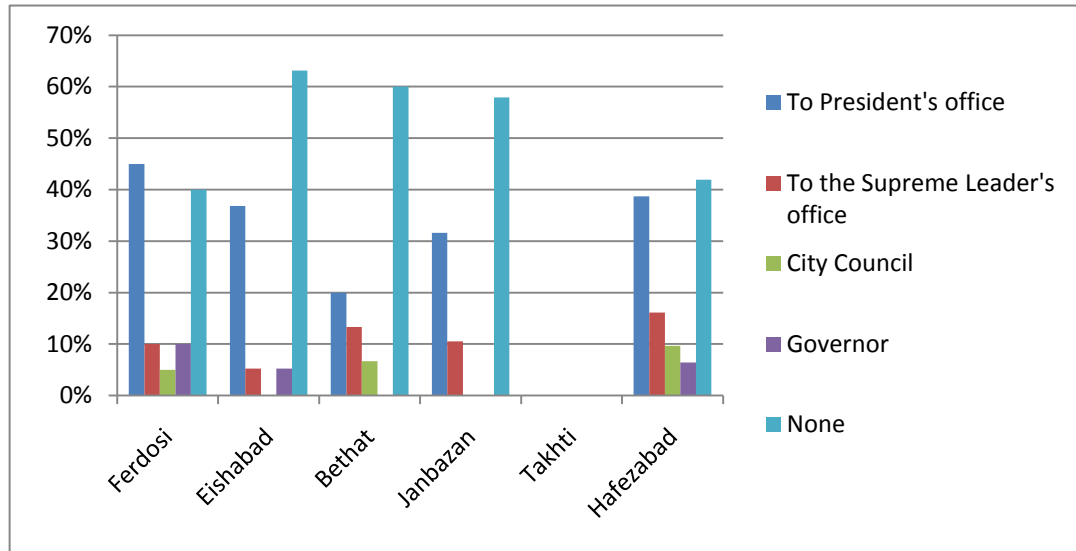
Figure 6.29 is extracted from the data revealed through the question: “How much impact do you think you have in making Bam a better place to live?”. Most of the residents have negative viewpoints on their role in Bam. On many occasions, the answer was "it is the role of the Municipality" or often citing the word “government” (and not local government) as having the responsibility to take care of the city. In some cases, people commented that, “we can be very influential and even have some ideas but there is nowhere to share them and no one asks us”.

**Figure 6.29: Sense of having impact in shaping the future of Bam, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008, (Q 33, App.1)**



To discuss it from the perspective of the wards, a comparison needs to be made: **Bethat-Almahdi** has the least "none at all" answers and most "to some extent". Age might be an influential factor in the sense of having power to change surroundings since the residents of Bethat-Almahdi are mostly young couples. "Very much" as a response in the questionnaires was very few, but in **Hafezabad** the highest rate of "very much" as an answer prevailed. However, here, the data might be influenced by the answers of the mason's family (which is discussed earlier in this chapter) who, with their strong bonding ties and financial support, had a better feeling about their lives than others. Nevertheless, the mason's family had never put in a grievance letter to the municipality or the city council. In **Ferdosi**, despite the fact that residents were in a better financial situation than in other wards, they felt they had the least power to affect change in Bam. One reason for this could be due to their better conditions which meant that they had less tolerance for harsh situations and higher expectations - hence suffering more from the conditions. This is especially so regarding the fact that based on Figure 6.30, residents of Ferdosi were one of the most active among the wards in sending grievance letters to the governor and the city council. Such a viewpoint was also apparent among the residents of **Eishabad**: they felt marginalised in the governance of Bam.

**Figure 6.30: Grievance, Sample Community, post earthquake Bam, 2008, (Q 34, App.1)**



At the time of the survey, the researcher came across a couple from Eishabad whose conditions were harsh. Their 200 square metre house was destroyed and only through loans were they able to rebuild an 85 square metre two-bedroom house. Five of their children were killed in the earthquake. The man was a taxi driver before the catastrophe; but in the earthquake his waist was broken and he was not able to drive anymore. For eight years prior to the earthquake they were supported by social welfare organisations and at the time of the survey they got a monthly subvention of 50 thousand Toman (about 50 USD). To be able to cover their basic needs, they had decided to sell their car and invest the money into the bank. The interest (about 30-40 USD per month) would help them stretch their budget a bit. They had a son whose eye was infected and could not work; nursing him had increased their expenses. Having no affluent friends or relatives, the only agency they thought might help was the government. However, the only complaint they made was to send a letter to the President's office (there was no response to the letter). In other words, they applied a person-to-person approach towards the government.

Figure 6.30 concerns the complaints of residents. Regarding Figure 6.30, Takhti's data is absent in the graph because it was the first ward that the survey took place in.

The initial form of questions was to ask residents about their participation in local or national elections and their attendance in any local seminar or public discussion group. All answered positively to participating in local or national elections. However, it became apparent that negative answers to such questions were risky for the respondents and could question their political participation. It is likely therefore that any positive answers to participation in the national presidential election or parliamentary election was not a genuine response. Moreover, after some questionnaires, it was revealed that no seminars or public discussion groups happened in Bam that involved the residents. However, people mentioned the letters they had sent to the president's office or the supreme leader's office regarding their problems. Consequently, the questions were amended to; "Have you sent any grievance letter to any organisation in last four years, if yes, to which organisation?", but unfortunately no data was collected from the Takhti district.

The most prominent answer was none. Most households did not send any grievance letter to any organisation. This is followed by most grievance letters being sent to the president's office in Tehran (and not to the local governor or city council). The reason for this could be that residents believed national leaders had more capacity and power to help them than local leaders. One resident in answering the question; "why didn't you ask local responsibilities to deal with Bam's problems?" answered "the governor is living in a prefabricated unit; if he had any power he would improve his own situation first". Or as one of the residents of Ferdosi stated:

Municipality by far had shown no productivity. The streets, after four years, are the same as they were in early days after the earthquake. They start refurbishment of one part but leave it unfinished after a while. We don't know what they do with the budget.

A resident of Eishabad stated:

The problem of the city is irresponsibility of local governmental organisations: There is no garbage collecting system; garbage remains in the street for days and brings bugs and animals. The street is messy and dusty; there is no pavement in the streets. The insecurity is high; our orchard is robbed daily by unknown people. The electricity was cut for seven days without any explanation. The mayor and governor are of no use.

Local officials pay no attention. I am an aged woman with six orphaned grand children and no source of income. I visited the governor and he said my issue should be addressed to the Eman Foundation Charity. I called the Emam Foundation and they said my case is related to the Welfare Organisation. I visited the Welfare Organisation and they asked me to fill out a form. I filled out the form and later checked the Organisation for a follow-up to my case. They said we have lost your form so I filled out another form but there was still no news until now. I got so exhausted. Now I sell bananas or snacks or cigarettes on the city corners but this money is hardly enough to feed the children (One of the residents of Takhti).

**Table 6.5: Networking and a sense of being important in shaping Bam,  
from the sample community**

District	Change in social gatherings	Neighbourhood cooperation	Sense of being important in shaping the future of Bam	Number of people who sent letters to the President's Office <sup>13</sup>	Number of people who sent letters to local government
Ferdosi	Decreased	Low	Low	Very high	Some
Eishabad	Highly decreased	Low	Low	High	None
Bethat-Almahdi	Decreased	Very low	Some	Low	Some
Janbazan	Highly decreased	Some	Some	Some	None
Takhti	Highly decreased	Some	High	-----	-----
Hafezabad	Highly decreased	Some	High	High	Some

<sup>13</sup> In most cases the letters were not replied to or had unsatisfying responses. In a few cases, people were happy with the responses.



### 6.3.6 Discussion

Residents of Bam have very strong family bonding relationships and this works for them as a coping mechanism. Through these family ties, financial resources flow and it provides them with psychological comfort and support. Young members shape new families and children which bring hope and joy for older members who then help them in providing shelter, income and resources. As long as this institution works properly, they are rarely concerned about outdoor issues.

The earthquake has affected this cultural way of life. The household size has decreased due to the high death toll caused by the earthquake. Some dependant families saw this as an opportunity to separate their shelter from their parents and become more independent.

In all districts, the number of social gatherings decreased along with the trust of residents in the new Bam. Residents revealed the least signs of any social empowerment; to be able to have an impact on their surroundings, on social cooperation; or to be able to air their complaints. Despite the high rate of trust among neighbours, social cooperation to improve neighbourhood conditions was very rare. Improving urban conditions was seen as “the government’s” task and people felt either not responsible or marginalised in this regard. The following paragraphs discuss the changes each district went through since the earthquake:

*Ferdosi* shows high resilience in terms of rebuilding their houses and livelihood: High access to transport, shelter and employment after the earthquake. However, little change in the levels of trust in the neighbourhood. People felt marginalised in the formal governing system of the city and believed the city had become unsafe and unfamiliar after the earthquake. There were no signs of new forms of networking: Social gatherings decreased, neighbourhood cooperation was low, and there were not many people to ask for money in times of difficulty. Residents showed their grievances by sending letters to the President's Office. In terms of corresponding

with the local government, despite not having satisfying correspondence, Ferdosi residents had the highest rate compared to other districts.

***Eishabad:*** shows low resilience in terms of access to shelter. In terms of livelihood, residents of the district were vulnerable before the earthquake and their vulnerability has not decreased after the earthquake: Access to transport and employment remain low in the district. The high potential dependency rate has increased their vulnerability. The neighbouring ties were strong but this has not helped them in reducing the problems of the ward (for example garbage collection). Social gatherings decreased and synergy between people and the local government was at a minimum level. People preferred contact with the President by sending letters instead of solving their problems through local organisations.

***Bethat-Almahdi:*** Here, there were the most signs of change since the earthquake. Its population is abnormally young (mostly between sixteen and thirty years old) and has the highest rate of post-earthquake married households. It also has the highest number of buildings under construction. Neighbourhood bonding ties were also weakest among the districts (considering the fact that in contrast to other districts, residents of Bethat-Almahdi were mostly located in geographical distance from their parents and siblings). Their trust towards neighbours and neighbourhood co-operation was very low. The data showed no vulnerability in terms of access to transport or employment. The residents preferred to use organisational correspondence methods over personal correspondence with the President. This might be due to the young age of the residents and being more familiar with a modern bureaucratic system.

Bethat-Almahdi and Takhti were both garden-urban areas with severe damage caused by the earthquake. While Bethat-Almahdi changed its demographic characteristic in the form of independent young people, this was not the case in Takhti. One reason for this could be the geographic location of the districts; Bethat-Almahdi was situated close to the dense-urban area whereas Takhti was far from it.

Takhti and Bethat-Almahdi were both severely damaged by the earthquake. Most of their inhabitants were killed in the earthquake, but while the new residents of Bethat-Almahdi were heirs of the deceased and came to Bam after the earthquake from other cities like Kerman. Heirs of the deceased or survivors from Takhti sold the land and bought new pieces in other parts of the city which were safer and less traditional (One of the Bami residents, 2011).

Bethat-Almahdi has become less traditional. We have more women drivers in Bethat-Almahdi than we had before the earthquake. Recently, a cab-hiring service for women was launched in the area and all of its drivers are women (One of the residents of Bam, 2011)

**Janbazan:** The most noteworthy issue about Janbazan is the fact that it has the highest number of secondary or extended households sharing one yard with their parents in an arrangement of prefabricated units and built houses. The effect of the earthquake on the residents of Janbazan was to separate them in terms of their shelter but not in terms of land. The household arrangement of the neighbourhoods has not changed considerably and there are some signs of neighbourhood cooperation. Their sense of being important in shaping the future of Bam was not negative and most of the residents felt there were people to help them financially in times of difficulty. This might therefore suggest that their social network has not changed substantially. Their synergy with the local government was none.

**Takhti:** The sample data shows that Takhti has kept its pre-earthquake character to a large extent. Households were living either independently or in an arrangement of built houses and prefabricated units with their parents or siblings in one yard. The trust levels towards neighbours has not changed and people still feel connected to the new Bam since some of the residents felt they can be influential in shaping its future. The mixed character of Takhti, as households living independent of their parents, or sharing one land, could be due to the changes the ward experienced since the

earthquake through demographic changes. Takhti had a high death toll in the earthquake; new residents are mostly either heirs of the previous ones or newcomers from other areas. This cannot be concluded definitively from the survey data, but adding data obtained from the interviews with local people, the situation does become clearer. Takhti did not experience the changes Bethat-Almahdi experienced, it kept its traditional character with high bonding ties - one reason for this could be its geographical distance from the dense-less traditional areas of Bam.

***Hafezabad:*** The district had very strong family bonding ties. Households were mostly populated and the number of post-earthquake wedded households was high. However, the newly wedded households were still living in close proximity to their parents on the same land or on neighbouring land. An interesting factor about Hafezabad was its higher networking efforts compared to other districts. There were signs of neighbourhood co-operation and efforts to send grievance letters to local organisations. This might be as a result of International Blue Crescent (IBC) organization's empowering project which was applied in Hafezabad. The impact of this project was that the people of Hafezabad felt they could be influential in shaping the future of Bam.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter studied the effect of reconstruction through the lens of the residents in Bam. A sample community of the six most devastated districts was chosen and a questionnaire survey applied. Through the results of the questionnaires, the strength of family bonding ties was explored and its relationship to the vulnerability of households studied. Age was another factor in examining the resilience of the residents. This was measured through access to shelter, transport, employment, social networks, government support, and through a sense of having the power to shape the future of Bam. It was realised that government reconstruction policy has affected the informal institutions of Bam; like marriage and the size of households. Many households separated their shelter from their parental family, often due to

limited choice, and most live in a prefabricated unit nearby to their parents. The earthquake changed the character of some districts like Bethat-Almahdi and Hafezabad, by accommodating new residents. The networking of the households was mostly in the form of people visiting their family and relatives, and to some extent neighbours, but also showed the least correlation with local government organisations.

## Chapter 7

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# Participatory Housing Reconstruction Approach in Bam and Outcomes

### 7.1 Introduction

Participatory approaches to development, despite being a buzzword in development discourse, showed little evidence of long-term effectiveness to address problems facing the most vulnerable or as a strategy for social change. Participatory discourse was an attempt to challenge the existing power relations in society by recognising structures of power and empowering the disempowered. However, in practice, this attempt was translated into, as Cleaver put it in (2001): "a managerial exercise based on 'toolboxes' of procedures and techniques...[which] remain largely concerned with efficiency" (p53).

As Giles Mohan (2008) rightly argues, understanding how participation is used is very important in realising its possible impact: "in terms of development, a key question is: if people participate, what are they aiming to gain by participating? (p46)". He addresses three rationales for participatory development: (1) Efficiency and effectiveness - this approach uses participation as a means for applying projects through involvement of beneficiaries; (2) Mutual learning - this approach uses participation as a means of achieving a higher goal. This higher goal is to obtain for people a better life by learning from each other and understanding in an epistemological way; and, (3) Transformative approaches that aim to create meaningful social change through valorising other voices. In this approach, participation is the end goal. Here, participation offers communities the self-determination they need to become associated with civil society.

The aim of this research is to probe further into participation as an approach that is highly applied in recent development projects. The most detailed definition is provided by Stiefel. Stiefel (1981, p1-2) defines participation in terms of 'organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of the groups and movements hitherto excluded from such decision making processes' (as cited by Desai, 2008, p116)

This chapter examines how centralised reconstruction programme can address the social vulnerabilities. The outcomes of applying blue-print approaches is studied: it discusses how projects end up being standardised and participation (being presented as the main aim of reconstruction of Bam) to be used as a means for increasing efficiency rather than being transformative. In this approach programmes are designed based on loss rather than needs and is blind to shortcomings of entitlement's pattern. This chapter discusses how shortcomings of legislative and cultural weaknesses in Bam exclude some groups of people to entitle the benefits of reconstruction and as a consequence it exacerbates their vulnerabilities. The chapter also examines how an urban and professional biased programme decreases the efficiency and effectiveness of the projects.

In doing so, this chapter is divided into six sections. The first section examines the housing reconstruction scheme designed in Tehran by members of the central government. The scheme was called ‘participatory housing reconstruction’ and explores how participatory turned out in practice and on paper. Two main problems were recognised and discussed by the author in terms of the participatory nature of the reconstruction programme: First, it was highly Tehran-biased in terms of finding designers and applicators for the housing projects, and second, it followed an inflexible blue-print approach. It will also be discussed how the policy ended up creating additional vulnerability due to distance and an unfamiliarity with local communities. After discussing these weaknesses, two sections are allocated to the effect of reconstruction on the Bami residents and their sense of belonging to the community. The first section was carried out through in-depth interviews with thirty seven Bamis in 2010; seven years after the earthquake and the second section consolidates secondary data from the early stages of reconstruction in 2004.

This chapter analysis the data collected through the following methods: face-to-face and semi-structured interviews took place with the governmental and Housing Foundation's officials in Tehran and Bam. The themes of the questions were their view-point about reconstruction and vulnerability, their priorities and challenges, and their method to approach the affected people and hear their problems. Documents, secondary data, and the views of people who were randomly and accidentally encountered are other sources of data of this chapter.

### **7.2 Participatory Housing Reconstruction Scheme of Bam**

Despite the fact that reconstruction in Bam was presented as a participatory approach by central officials, the reconstruction plan was designed shortly after the earthquake by Tehrani architects and through the Strategic Reconstruction Bureau. The reconstruction Plan for Bam designed by the Council of Architecture and Urban Development was based on three aims:



- a) Preserving the city identity through urban design;
- b) Strengthening the new houses against the earthquake through the national building code; and
- c) Householders' participation in the process of rebuilding.

In designing the housing reconstruction plan, the above aims were prioritised; however, there was evidence that the architectural and technical aspects of houses received more focus than a participatory housing approach. On page 23 of the guidance to reconstruction published by the HF on August 2005 it is stated that:

"It should be noted that the reconstruction of Bam is different from other experiences of reconstruction in Iran regarding participation. The attempt in previous reconstruction projects was to help the affected people to rebuild their own houses, in such cases HF acted more as a facilitator; but in the case of Bam, due to the importance of the unique and historical architectural importance of the buildings and the city design and in order to build earthquake-resistant buildings, more guidance is applied by the professional architects and contractors in designing and implementing the housing scheme.

In "Housing Reconstruction Programme of post-earthquake Bam" prepared by the Strategic Reconstruction Bureau (*Setade-Rahbordi-e-Bazsazi*), the objective of Bam's reconstruction effort is defined as:

Reconstruction and regeneration of residential and commercial units of rural and urban areas affected by the earthquake in accordance with the regional development plans and based on national and *local capacities* and abilities in order to *restore the liveliness and function* of cities and towns of Bam's region (Author's Italic).

Further, in the chapter about administrative policies, it was highlighted that:

It is necessary for HF to be in coordination with involved organizations like the municipality to lubricate the process of reconstruction and prevent parallel activities and increase public information about the construction in order to solve pre-disaster substandard construction method through providing financial support and awareness. Otherwise, *focusing merely on restoring the pre-disaster situation will consequent in misuse of the created opportunity to develop the construction techniques and hence would have no effect on the development of the life qualities* and also will increase the future risk.(Author's Italic)

At the initial stages of reconstruction, many decision-makers boasted about the participatory nature of Bam's reconstruction plan as a new agenda in reconstruction experiences for Iran:

It is the first time in any reconstruction planning in Iran that participation is considered seriously. In this direction, UNDP and the government made their planning based on people's participation and choice. After several years of post-disaster reconstruction planning, the best attempts have been made to make the most appropriate reconstruction planning in Bam (One of the staff from the Ministry of Housing responsible for the design of Bam's Reconstruction Plan. The interview took place in the summer, 2005).

After years of experiencing post-war and post-disaster reconstruction planning in Iran, it is realised that the best way to reconstruct is not through building new houses for people, but to facilitate the reconstruction process for them to build their own houses. For example, in the reconstruction of Boenzahra (1961), the government built new modern apartments for rural people from the area which ended up in misusing the properties and importing rural culture into modern apartments; like bringing goats and sheep

onto balconies. In this way [encouraging and supporting people to build their own houses], not only houses will be built in accordance with the culture and needs of local people, but also people will be active in the reconstruction process and it will help them to feel that a new life is forming.” (One of the officials in the disaster centre from the Ministry of Interior. The interview took place in the summer 2005).

Furthermore, to explain the role of people in reconstruction, he continues:

It is important to insert resistant measures into new constructions. In this respect, the government and the UNDP have applied a community-based, cost-effective and earthquake-resistant housing approach that could be cheaply and easily replicated in earthquake-prone areas. They have created an exhibition of cheap and earthquake resistant houses outside the Bam district. Different types of cheap and earthquake-resistant houses were built and exhibited to the people. An album was prepared from the pictures of these houses. People who apply for new houses will choose one of the houses from the album. Then they will ask for a contractor. The contractors play a great role. These contractors should all be qualified in terms of considering earthquake-resistant measures in construction. In this way, qualified contractors are given a qualification certificate. Whenever applicants choose their type of house and make contracts with licensed contractors, they can apply for government loans. The government is offering loans and grants of up to USD 11,000 to those who have lost their homes; to rebuild their houses. In this way, people can “choose” their type of house. The houses are actually built by the local people under their own supervision. The government is financially supporting people, and houses are being built earthquake-resistant.

During interviews, participation was regarded by officials as mutual assistance between the government and Bamis through the rebuilding of the destroyed houses:

The government is not doing the reconstruction. The government gives people technical and financial support and advice. The Housing Foundation lends government financial support to people - it is a link between the people and the central government. People are rebuilding the city by themselves. This will help people to implement their own choice of building in accordance with their culture. It also has positive psychological effects - people see and feel that their community is being reconstructed and can become attached once again to a home, place and life. The affected person should get a contractor and materials, who will supervise the building process, and become involved in the reconstruction field” (One of the staff members of HF, 2005).

People are provided with an exhibition of earthquake resistant buildings, which are designed in accordance with Bami culture, weather and identity. Affected people will choose from these houses. Professionals have assessed all the engineering and architectural aspects of the building. Therefore, the local people will not be involved in engineering details of the buildings. They will choose their type of house among dozens of buildings; they will get contractors and materials and will supervise the building process. In this way, they will rebuild their homes, which are designed to be disaster resistant (ibid).

According to the above comments, it becomes clear that all officials unanimously saw participation through supervision (rather than implementation) of houses which are designed and measured by non-local architects and engineers. They believed this would be beneficial for people in terms of the psychological aspects: people see their houses and city being constructed and feel hopeful. Many academics wrote articles about the benefits of such approaches in scientific journals considering Bam’s experience as one of the successful cases:

In the city of Bam, community active participation in the process of designing, planning and constructing units was strongly encouraged. This approach provided a great relief to peoples' pain and suffering and helped to mitigate their psychological pressures...In the case of Bam, householders were given the ability to choose their own plans and layouts and act as the supervisors of their own projects, thus paving the way to establish a line of cooperation between designers and contractors. This approach also ensured that government loans resulted in the desired houses being built for the people (Fallahi, 2007, p31).

Despite promising words and views expressed by officials and academics about the reconstruction, neither the physical objectives of the designed plan were met nor were the social aspects of vulnerability addressed. In continuous visits to Bam it was observed that after seven years since the earthquake, a great number of people still stay in prefabricated units. The constructed houses are typically hostile to the initial desire of the planners. Many streets in Bam are unfurnished and the presence of debris and dust has resulted in the expansion of skin disease called leishmaniasis (a disease transmitted by the bite of phlebotomine sand flies). According to a study by Ranjbar *et al* (2010), the number of people with leishmaniasis is 5.8 times more than before the earthquake. In a study that will be presented later in this chapter, the top ten most expressed anxieties of a sample group of 208 Bami men and women were as follows: being left homeless, low job opportunities, the remains of dust and rubbish, the high cost of living, feeling insecure because of newcomers, leishmaniasis, depression, the increase of substance abuse, missing loved ones, and the destruction of social values. These anxieties are contrary to the defined objectives of the reconstruction: to restore the liveliness and function of the cities, development of life qualities, development of construction techniques, and an increase in local capacity.

This research outlines the main limitations of the participatory approach of Bam's reconstruction, primarily, as a result of being urban-biased in design, and due to following a 'blue-print' approach in implementation. The reconstruction approach of

Bam was highly urban-biased. The knowledge of professional Tehrani architects was prioritised over the words and needs of Bamis. The unfamiliarity of the planners with what the Bamis' wanted resulted in the alienation of local Bamis with their new 'reconstructed space'. Moreover, despite the intention to make the reconstruction of Bam participatory, in practice the officials applied a blue-print approach that was inflexible, focused on physical output and standardisation, and which increased the bureaucratic nature of the housing reconstruction.

### 7.3 Urban-bias Nature of Reconstruction

The favouritism towards Teherani professionals and to equating an urban and modern life-style to a developed one seriously hindered the achievement of empowering and inclusive participation. The reconstruction of Bam is a good example of urban bias in the sense that local Bamis were marginalised in their physical reconstruction plans due to their limited construction knowledge. Instead of making use of local workers, *setads* from other cities were involved in the reconstruction, and Bami workers did not participate:

I was a contractor in Bam before the earthquake, but despite the good market for construction business, I was marginalized as a contractor in the reconstruction process because the city was in the hands of *setads*<sup>1</sup> and each *setad* had its own contractors who had come to Bam from other cities. And for achieving a contractor license for reconstruction, my experience did not meet their demands. Hence, after the earthquake I changed my job to taxi-driving (A Bami driver).

In a meeting about reconstruction in 2005, a Tehrani professional architect and a member of the Council of Architecture and Urban development of Bam stated that:

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<sup>1</sup> The HF branches throughout the city - see chapter five

Because of the historical importance of Bam, we have to pay special attention to its architecture in reconstruction and cannot let Bam be built by unprofessional local builders. We have to use modern managing techniques in construction and apply mass construction approaches which are cheaper.

Dr Zand Razavi, a social scholar in the meeting objected and mentioned:

The people of Bam are unemployed, so construction can be a good opportunity for them to be busy, divert the reconstruction budget to Bamis, and transfer the safety construction technique to Bam. But choosing mass construction as our objective instead of participation will ruin this opportunity.

In an interview with the Head of *Naghshe-Jahane-pars* (the main construction coordinator for companies in Bam, but situated in Tehran, who was also one of the main decision-makers designing the reconstruction plan), he was asked for his opinion on the role of Tehran-based companies in reconstruction. His idea was that:

Our plan was to make reconstruction of buildings a means to link the physical reconstruction with the recovery of minds and souls. Houses were meant to be built with traditional Bami design but only earthquake resistant. There were twenty four housing consultants in Bam which were mostly from Tehran. Bam was an agricultural city; their experience in architecture and construction was rudimentary. We had no choice but to apply for contractor and architectures from other cities in order to have safer and nice buildings (Winter, 2010).

The absence of local workers in the reconstruction process was also reflected in Parliament:

Most of the construction companies are based in other cities, mostly Tehran, and for each technical problem the blueprints and plans have to be sent to the company to be studied by the professionals and the companies' construction engineers to be solved. In eighty percent of cases the problems are trivial; in some cases a plan travels three to eleven times before it can be approved. (Parliament website, 16 November 2006).

Box 7.1. Those who were formally involved in reconstruction used to make short travels to Bam, say once a week, by airplane from distant cities and made their stay in Bam as short as possible. We had the least direct connection with them. The *setad* that worked for our area were not serious in their duties. But where could we raise our objections? We were dictated the process and had to follow it based on the designed schedule. (A Bami man, 2010)

The idea of the Head of Bam's City Council was that the system of reconstruction had perceived Bamis as incapable "children" not qualified for the task:

Bam should be built by local people who find the reconstruction of Bam a moral duty, not by Tehrani people who want to take care of us like children. We do not need professionals to sit in Tehran and decide for us, we are capable of reconstructing Bam and want to be involved. We demand that the State plays only as a supervisor (The Head of Bam's City Council, 2004).

In a visit to the Housing Foundation branch in Bam, almost all members of the staff were not Bami and were mostly from Tehran; only the drivers of the HF were Bami. By asking the HF in Bam why they had not used Bami workers in reconstructing Bam the opinion was that Bamis are not efficient: "They spend too much time doing too little work. They are mostly substance users and this makes them idle" (2007).



Another reason often cited as one of the obstacles in applying the participatory approach, was the time consuming nature of it; people needed shelter quickly which was more important. The importance of speed in the reconstruction of the houses was the main excuse that reconstruction planners mentioned for the unwanted outcomes of reconstruction:

The plan was creating several schemes of houses and not to apply each scheme more than ten times. In this way, people would have different options and schemes to choose houses and houses would not look similar to each other. But what was implemented was different from what we had in mind. The huge demand for houses and the limited time we had to prepare schemes for twenty five thousand houses for people who were in instant need of shelter ended up in repetitious schemes. People were too desperate to pay attention and communicate with the schemes. Moreover, it was easier for contractors and *setads* to control and apply the projects in this way (the Head of *Naghshe-Jahane-pars*, winter 2010).

According to the above, the reconstruction of Bam was considered by central officials, who hold core perception power and resources, as a highly professional task - by professional they meant experienced Tehrani architects. The specification of reconstruction to rebuilding the destructed houses and retail stores blindfolded decision makers to observe the deeper factors of vulnerability of the Bamis people and hence the designed policy of reconstruction increased the vulnerability of many Bami residents through further marginalisation.

### **7.3.1 Structural weaknesses in the Reconstruction Policy and the Shaping of Vulnerability**

One of the main problems of the reconstruction policy of Bam was its focus on landownership which was a problematic issue in Bam even before the earthquake. For benefitting loans initially one has to prove landownership. This put two groups

in a vulnerable situation: people who did not have formal ownership of the lands before the earthquake (like renters or informal-dwellers), and those who faced problems regarding land inheritance after the death of the owner following the earthquake (especially women who had lost their husband in the earthquake).

In terms of renters, since they could not prove any form of landownership, they remained vulnerable; especially during the early stages of reconstruction. Later, they were included in the policy guidelines: they could benefit from construction loans if they could afford a piece of land. Those households who were not affluent enough to afford a piece of land remained vulnerable, especially new female-headed households. Bam had a strong traditional society before the earthquake; women were mostly housekeepers running often crowded households. The average household size in the Bam region in 1996 was 5.5 and in the city of Bam was 5.2 (national census 1996). Forty one percent of the population in Bam was under fifteen in 1996 (national census 1996). In 1996, 43.4 percent of the population from the Bam region were households, this number in the city was 39.3 (national census 1996). Men in households provided the main sources of income:

We were renters before the earthquake. I lost my husband in the earthquake and have no skill or income resource to feed my two small children. My sister is kind enough to let me put my prefabricated unit in her yard, but being a burden to my sister's family I feel ashamed and anxious" one of the Bami interviewees during the fieldwork; to the question that whether she had heard about the HF's reconstruction policy for pre-disaster renters she did not. Later she received shelter from an NGO.

I lost my husband in the earthquake and was left with three small children - the youngest being two years old at the time of the disaster. Being a renter before the earthquake we had no shelter after the disaster. Consequently after the emergency phase in tents we rented a prefabricated unit for seventy thousand Toman (70 USD) per month. Our income sources were the Welfare

Organization; with forty thousand Toman per month (which we would put into our account every four to six months), and NGOs” One of the affected women from the earthquake.

Another group who became vulnerable through this policy was informal dwellers. As the studies of Ekhlaspour (2008) reveal, with the development of the service sector and the tightening of the agriculture sector, farmers from surrounding towns migrated to the city and resided in the margins of the city - in tents or other kinds of temporary and informal shelters and created a marginal society.

The designed participatory approach for reconstruction tries to be comprehensive but there are limitations to it. For example, pre-earthquake informal dwellers have no land or houses before the earthquake to claim for in reconstruction. Governments' funds are for those who have lost their formal estate; it does not cover informal dwellers (A member of the Natural Disaster sector of the government, 2005).

Another fact that lowered the inclusiveness of the participatory reconstruction approach based on landownership was the national heritage legislation. According to Articles 946 and 947 of heritage law, the wife can only inherit buildings, trees, and moveable property<sup>2</sup>. Based on this law, the wife was deprived from inheriting the land from her husband. The land would be inherited by the children or other heirs. In the case of Bam where the earthquake had destroyed buildings and trees, many women had lost their husbands in the earthquake. They had no right to apply for loans even though they were now the head of their household, because they had not inherited the land and could not rely on the deeds to apply for loans. The land would primarily be inherited by the children who were mostly under eighteen years old. The civil guardian for these young children was their grandfather, who in many cases in Bam abused this right and used it as a means to control or harass the family. The

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<sup>2</sup> The law was amended later in 2009 and women could also inherit the land as well, but it was not retrospective.

land heritage along with custody law put many Bami women in vulnerable circumstances after the earthquake (Boxes 7.1 and 7.2).

It has to be said that the extent of the outcome of this law is not catastrophic in Bam because people mostly are either unaware of the law or do not care to regard it. But there are cases of females in such a situation who want to rebuild their house but their father-in-law does not give permission because he considers himself the owner of the land. Or in some cases, there are children who have lost both their parents in the earthquake and their grandfather (from their father's side) does not reside in Bam or is dead. These children are left without a guardian since there is no grandfather from their father's side and their grandfather from their mother's side is not a legitimate guardian (Ekhlaspour, Zanan magazine, 2005).

During the fieldwork for this research, one of the households with such a problem was interviewed. The woman had lost her husband and three of her children in the earthquake and was left with a twelve-year-old son and an undergraduate daughter. The land belonged to her husband and now to her father-in-law. The father-in-law did not agree to the transfer of the title of land to the lady or his grand-children. The grand-father himself is in need and gets subvention from Emam committee: "Instead of giving us support, he often demands money from us since he knows we are dependent on the land and he has the last word for selling or keeping it".

Another group of women who were marginalised through the reconstruction effort, were single women who were formally married but their husbands were absent in their life, mostly from being left by their husband without a divorce. It became evident that in Bam polygamy is common, often temporary marriages, but where the husband lives with one wife and leaves behind the other wife or wives (usually the oldest one being left behind) and regularly leaves the children with their mother. The reconstruction loan would be given to the head of the household and each household could only apply once.

This group can be called the forgotten group in reconstruction. There is no shelter for these women, and they are not few: for one female headed household there are five abandoned women. Because they have no permanent marriage deeds [their marriage deeds are mostly temporary] they are put in a vulnerable position. Many of them are not native and are mistaken as opportunistic newcomers. Even if these women bring one hundred native Bamis to provide evidence that they have lived here for years before the earthquake or even had a small retail store, their existence in Bam cannot be accepted as legitimate. These women are left vulnerable. Consequently they still live in camps which were considered to be temporary but are still running.” (Ekhlaspour, February 2005).

Box 7.2. We were renters before the earthquake. My husband died in the earthquake and since then I have been struggling to take care of my children. After their father, their legal guardian would be their grandfather. But the grandfather gave us nothing but trouble. I only have an old mother who could hardly take care of herself. My father-in-law, despite being rich, did not give his grandchildren any money and considers me alien to their family. When I was going to move to the house that one of the NGOs provided for us, he stopped me claiming that he does not want his grandchildren being raised by a charity. No money was coming into the household; I could not leave my children alone, and I had no one to take care of them. Their grandfather neither gave them any money nor let me get any benefit from the charity. The government’s financial support from WO for my children is sent to their guardian, my father-in-law, since I don’t have custody of my children. He never gave the money to us. I complained to the court to either get my *Mahrieh* from my father-in-law or to force them to give me custody of my children. He took my children for three days and did not let me to see them to prove that, if he wants, he can deprive me from seeing my children. After three days of crying I withdrew my case from the court and took the children back. I finally brought my children here [to the house provided by an NGO]. Thank God I now have job - I am employed at the University’s kitchen as a cook (One of the young mothers, 2007).

Box 7.3. Before the earthquake we were living in the property inherited by my mother-in-law after my father-in-law died years before the earthquake. The earthquake killed both my husband and my mother-in-law. The house then was inherited by my oldest brother-in-law. He did not let us live there anymore; we were not even allowed to put our tent in the yard. Consequently, I and my two children went to the camp. Having no source of income and no guardian we registered with the Welfare Organization to benefit from subvention but it hardly covered our expenses. Subventions are very small and take long delays before they are paid: eighty thousand Toman (about USD 80) per month. We moved to a camp. A few months after the earthquake, I married the camp's manager. After a while, we divorced because I did not agree to send my children from my previous marriage away. To keep my youngest child from the second marriage I was forced by my husband to give up my *Mahrieh* (a traditional custom in the form of the amount of money a husband agrees to pay the wife whenever she asks, and by the time of the divorce it had to be paid totally), since legally my child's custody would be given to his father after divorce. There was me again, with three children and no support. I went to my brother-in-law and asked him for my children's share of the inheritance of the land. He had told us before that when the property was built, the children could have their share. I called on him as my last hope, but he would not give me the share because I was remarried. My son has asthma and this increases our monthly expenses. I started to provide and sell dried prepared cooking herbs but since women of Bam are usually housewives and have a lot of time for cooking there were few customers. I started sewing to be able to afford to provide for my family. The House of Mother and Children found us and provided us with shelter. If they did not help us, I have no idea how we could have survived (a Bami young mother of three children).

One of these women shared her experience with the researcher. Her husband abandoned her years before the earthquake and left her with two daughters. There were neither divorce deeds nor permanent marriage deeds. The husband now lives with his new wife in another city and the daughters receive no alimony. After her husband left, she started to work as a servant in a school with a minimum wage. It was hard to provide for her family. Her aim was to raise her daughters in a decent way so that having no father to support them does not damage their social reputation. Due to the earthquake, their house was destroyed. There was no money to rebuild the house and for a while no school to serve for, hence no income. She asked the Emam Khomeini Relief Foundation for financial support, but since she was not

unemployed, the foundation's policies did not cover her situation. Her next hope was the State Welfare Organization; she hoped that she could benefit from WO as the female head of her household. However, as she couldn't prove her marriage, her application failed. Now her only source was a nine million Toman bank loan. At the time of the interview the loan was completed but not the house. She was still living in prefabricated units with her daughters and a nine-million-Toman debt to the government which she has to repay at 120 USD per month from her wages.

The centralised approach disregards the local networks and norms and this may increase the vulnerability of some groups. Social capital in the form of trust was of much importance among Bami residents and especially in the bazaar of Bam. The informal networks and trust among retailers in Bam's bazaar had created a safety network that made them less concerned about their formal and legal networks and situations; which after the disaster brought about vulnerability for many of them. As one of the Bami respondents explained:

I had rented a small shop in the bazaar before the earthquake. Through the social credit I had among other retailers since my father was a well-known businessman of the bazaar for a long time I had not made any effort to apply for a business license from the municipality. After the earthquake, because my business was selling glass, I lost all my capital. Legally, I had no right to appeal for my loss of the business. In reconstructing the bazaar, the retailers of the bazaar were marginalised. The National heritage organisation became the main body for physical reconstruction of the bazaar. The plan was to build the bazaar according to the design that was provided in Teheran, and by contractors employed by the Heritage organisation. The shops then would be allocated to previous owners who had formal permissions from the municipality. After six years, the bazaar is still incomplete. The reason is said to be through lack of budget. The new bazaar lacks Bami character and new shops are different from the previous ones in terms of shape and size: they are all the same. Hence, those who had larger stores were given stores that were smaller than their previous ones. The bazaar is built without the

involvement of the real owners' ideas and efforts. It is said that the municipality has taken over the basement of the bazaar for its own interests without the permission of the real owners.

The following conclusions can be taken from the above story: First, the bonding ties among businessmen of the bazaar was very strong; second, despite the fact that strong bonding ties brought about a safety network among the retailers themselves, it made them vulnerable to legal factors because they felt safe among their informal network and found no necessity to ask for additional safety (including formal work permission) from the local government (the dark side of social capital); third, the centralised planned reconstruction process not only alienated the Bami retailers through marginalising them from the reconstruction process, but it damaged their sense of belonging through creating forms and shapes that were not familiar with Bami retailers; fourth, by not feeling a part of the reconstruction process, the story implied that some Bami retailers feel they were given less than what they should have been given in some cases, reduction in size of their stores or not benefiting from the reconstruction outcomes due to their legal vulnerability (i.e. not having legal job permits); fifth, while local government could play as a mediator between local retailers and the central decision makers, the municipality was regarded by Bamis as a threat rather than as an associate. This was due to the lack of financial support from the central government so the municipality applied opportunistic behaviours to add to its financial resources; in this case by occupying the basement of the bazaar.

Based on the above stories, the centralised-designed reconstruction policy had shortcoming in terms of addressing the vulnerability of some vulnerable groups. Along with the structural weaknesses of the designed policies, implementation of the projects was also unsuccessful in delivering the objectives of the designed housing reconstruction schemes. This research attributes following a blue-print approach to the implementation of the projects, as the main cause of its short-comings.



## 7.4 The Blueprint Approach

One of the disadvantages of Bam's reconstruction was that it followed a blue-print approach. The projects were inflexible, prioritising efficiency over social learning, standardised, and not based on local people's demands. It resulted in marginalising local people in physical reconstruction and de-skilling young workers. As a result of prioritising efficiency over learning and local participation, non-local workers piled into Bam. According to an Afghan refugee worker in 2004, because of the high scale level of construction, Bam was the best place to work as a construction labourer in Iran. For that reason, the opportunity that reconstruction created could have been a learning opportunity for local builders - to learn construction techniques, for example, safe building, or for the young Bamis to become experienced in construction. As it turned out, this opportunity was wasted.

Bam has become the market for construction business and because there is no limit on the use of local workers, the supply of non-local workers has increased. It would not be efficient for the contractor to employ local workers just for the sake of local participation. The opportunity to transfer money from the reconstruction to the Bami people has been wasted. Bamis are mostly unemployed and depressed; construction could have helped them in terms of their livelihood and to overcome trauma (Local newspaper *shahrvandan va mosharekat*, February 2005).

Box 7.4. In applying our project, all of the workers were Afghan refugees. They were more efficient than Bami workers. The construction market of Iran benefits a lot from Afghan refugees. They work hard and expect less. Even Bamis for rebuilding their homes applied Afghani workers (a Tehrani contractor working in Bam, 2010).

In order to standardise the process and to prevent any obstacles that may occur from unprofessional residents, The Housing Foundation laid down conditions for

applications for reconstruction facilities. All applicants had to sign a written undertaking that they would not interfere with the process of construction and would let the contractors accomplish the task based on the contractor's priorities. For the same reason, the local organisations were also put to one side.

In practice the City Council is not considered seriously by the central decision-makers. In meetings to design the city plan there is no call for the City Council. When the City Council as a formal organization of Bam is not being included in planning how can the voice of the people of Bam be reflected in the plan? (Head of Bam's City Council, 2004).

At the initial phases it was understandable to put aside local agents in decision-making because of the trauma we had all gone through. But now after one year since the earthquake I see no reason for marginalizing us in the design and implementation of physical reconstruction. If they believe we are not professional enough, they have to consider that it was Bami people who built Arge-Bam which is now one of the UN Heritage sites. At least give us a six-month window where we can show we are capable of handling the task or not. I assure you we are capable technically in reconstructing Bam by ourselves" (Head of City Council of Bam, 2004).

This process of dictating technical details to dwellers made the "participation" rather a hassle for Bamis.

Contrary to the ubiquitous optimistic assertions about the benefits of public participation, there are numerous documented examples of situations where individuals find it easier, more beneficial, or habitually familiar not to participate (Adams *et al*, 1997; Zwarteveen and Neupane 1996) (Cleaver, 2001, p51).

The building process is a waste of time. We are not allowed to build our houses by ourselves; it is the task of *Setads*. But they postpone the construction for trivial reasons. Initially, when I applied, they told me to move the prefabricated unit to the other side of the land. Then they rejected the one hundred and ten square metre house plan that I had chosen because they believed it was not suitable for the size of my land; despite the fact that my four hundred fifty square metre land is big enough for such a house. After a lot of hassle, I finally got the license for construction, but again when it came to implementation the contractor said I had to change the location of the house and put the prefabricated unit on another part of the land. Now I am too exhausted to follow the construction to-do list, hence I have put the construction on pause (Opinion of a Bami man).

The housing reconstruction process of Bam was also highly bureaucratic. The applicants for building contractors and loans had to initially complete an application form in the *setad* of his area. A building professional from *setad* had to approve the location of the house in line with urban and engineering regulations.

Then the applicant had two choices: either the design of the eighty five square metre scheme, or if he wanted another design with different sizes he had to apply to one of the construction consultants (who had come from main urban areas like Tehran and Kerman and organised branches in Bam since the earthquake). The new scheme would be sent to the supervising consultant of the reconstruction situated in Bam and after approval would be sent to the main city of the province i.e. Kerman for the final approval. Then the approved scheme would be sent to the *setad* for the applicant's area. The process would last for a few months. This means that if a Bami applicant did not want the scheme, his construction process would be delayed for at least for two months. In such circumstances, most of the applicants chose the design which would enable them to access their shelter earlier and with less hassle. According to the local newspaper, *shahrbandan-va-mosharekat* printed on November 2004, by November 2004 one thousand houses and building licenses had been requested from the local government which were all in the eighty five square metre design type.

The case then would be sent to the central Housing Foundation in Bam which is in charge of controlling *setads*. The application would be checked to see if the applicant had made any other application form to other *setads*. This would be to prevent any abuse of the system whereby applicants could benefit from more loans. Then the case would be sent to Kerman to be assessed under the building regulations and also assessed in line with the engineering constitution. After that, the case would be sent to the municipality for final corrections and calculation of taxes before a construction permit would be granted.

At this point, the applicant was able to apply for a loan. In order to obtain the loan, the applicant had to complete an application form with the bank and provide a record. The loan would then be transferred in five instalments to the account of the contractor (not to the account of the Bami landowner) based on the physical progress of the house construction. If the applicant wanted to benefit from subsidised building materials, he had to complete another form and prepare one more case.

This process of transferring the reconstruction budget was designed to ease the control over the process by HF:

Loans were specified for building of houses and were not supposed to be spent on any other project. For this reason, the idea was not to hand the total loans to the applicants in cash to prevent the misuse of it. Gradual injection of loans based on the report of the contractor keeps the local applicants in continual contact with *setads* and keeps the participatory approach alive (A member of *Setad*, 2007).

The cost of preparation for the schemes, plans, designs of the houses, along with the municipality taxes of the building construction less than one hundred square metres, was covered entirely by the central government's budget and Bamis' paid nothing for these services, albeit for an estimated period of time. In the fall of 2008, the HF left Bam. From the State's point of view, the housing reconstruction in Bam had been

completed by the end of 2008. According to the HF reports by January 2009, 21,051 houses were completely built (out of thirty three thousand demands mentioned by Saidi-kia, in other words the housing scheme succeeded in reconstructing sixty three percent of total demand).

This approach not only prevented local people from participating in the reconstruction of their city but also took financial resources out of Bam. Some parts of the budget for reconstruction were even given to *setads* whose staff were non-local.

The idea of entering different provinces of the country to reconstruct Bam was new. The Bam Housing Foundation decided to benefit from having some of its branches in the country to facilitate the reconstruction process. For this reason the city of Bam was divided into ten sections and each section was given to a representative from the Housing Foundation in one of the provinces of Iran (the division was geographical); these representatives were called *setads*. Ten provinces out of twenty five provinces of Iran had a Housing Foundation representative in Bam. In an interview with the Head of the reconstruction centre from the Housing Foundation in Tehran it was discovered that the idea of using *setads* in reconstruction was merely an implementing means and had no social participatory implication concept behind it. It was not an initiative to involve other provinces in spreading experience and knowledge or creating bridging ties among provinces. The sole idea behind this was technical.

We found out that the extent of disaster was huge. The central Housing Foundation [Tehran based HF] did not have the capacity to cover the reconstruction. For that reason we invited other branches of HF in other provinces to help the central HF especially in terms of providing construction machineries. There was no obligation for provinces to participate. The provinces that participated were those who showed interest in our invitation

and saw reconstruction of Bam as a source of income for their province. (2006).

The accountability of *setads* was non-existent. There were several cases where the contractor took the money and left the project without completing the buildings.

Different *setads* from different provinces had used the workers and engineers and contractors mostly from their own provinces. The contractors in Bam were not top contractors. They were mostly low ranking contractors and apparently *setads* had less control over them. Many of them had run away with people's money leaving no trace behind. The money would only be given to contractors and not to people. The reason for many of the unfinished houses is as a result of these fraud contractors. Those people facing this problem could not continue to build their houses: the price of the material increased and the loan was stolen (A social activist in Bam. The interview took place in 2011).

Box 7.5. The contractor had run away with our money. We are about fifteen people who put in an appeal to arrest the contractor but there was no clue as to where he was (a Bami woman, 2007).

The state did not fraud, it had a policy, plan and allocated a budget for reconstruction, but it was the staff members of the governmental organisations or contractors who were corrupt and fraud. The policy created such an opportunity and hence those who could, abused it. In my case, the contractor disappeared with ten million Tomans of my money (One of the residents of Eishabad in Bam, 2007)

In an interview with *Etemad* newspaper in September 2009, Saidi-Kia, the Chief of the Reconstruction Bureau (who later became the Minister of Housing for Iran), shared his experience of reconstruction as follows:

Box 7.6. With the eleven million Toman loan for reconstruction we were successful building this seventy square metre house with two rooms, but the house is still not complete. The outside façade has no cement cover and it is bare bricks. The contractor has run away with our last loan instalment; three and a half million Toman. There were many in our area whose contractors had stolen their loans and left them with semi-built houses (A thirty five year man - the head of a family of four of Khayyam st, 2010).

Box 7.7. The loan that was allocated to the Bamis was designed to be given to contractors instead of directly being handed to the people. But in my case, the contractor who was building my house has run away with the loans without building my house. *Setads* instead of giving him instalments in segments based on satisfaction paid him four segments at once and the contractor ran away with the money that was supposed to pay for the construction of my house. The problem was that the housing foundation which invited these contractors from all over Iran did not know them and had no knowledge of their experience. We took legal action against him but nobody knows where he is. I could have built my house because I am a construction worker, but *setad* made us use the contractors if we wanted to get a loan. Now I have neither a house nor any loan (A Bami man, 2006).

I was the Head of the Housing Foundation in Tehran at the time of the disaster. After the earthquake, I became the Head of the Bureau of Reconstruction for Bam. All the administrative decisions for the reconstruction and the design of the bureaucratic process were the responsibility of the Bureau. Twenty three thousand houses were destroyed including demand from new couples. We had to build thirty three thousand houses (not including rural houses). The initial idea was to build houses for the Bamis people but the Housing Foundation finally decided to apply a participatory approach. The participatory approach that HF had in mind was

to prepare financial and material support for Bamis from the central government and help people to remove the debris created by the earthquake. People started participating in the reconstruction of their houses, instead of having houses built for them

The approach was as follows: each applicant would refer to the consultant of his area the plan of his land. Then they would consult on the design, size and material for the house. After two months, the scheme would be prepared and the contractor would start building. HF would supervise the process. There were comments made that the earthquake-affected Bami who had lost close family and friends in the earthquake would be so depressed that they wouldn't want to spend time choosing the design of their house. But my idea was that the process would force the Bami to participate in building his house and through making him busy with the process he would gradually get back to normal life...by participation we meant people had the choice [the style of his house].

Through this definition, the idea of HF helping people to participate in reconstruction resulted in the Bamis being involved in a process of bureaucracy through the application of loans, material, schemes, contractors and more.

In practice the focus on efficiency and standardisation decreased the quality of service and inflexibility of the process to unexpected outcomes:

There is evidence that many construction companies responsible in the reconstruction of Bam lack the managerial and technical capacity for the task at the level required for Bam in the given time. Moreover, inefficiencies in Bam's reconstruction process by these companies often made these companies ask lower ranking and cheaper construction companies to supervise the construction which will result in substandard supervision and



decrease the expected quality of service (Parliament website, 16 November 2006).

The unplanned incidents affected the reconstruction process and proved that standardised approaches do not suit the development projects - especially in a large scale project like Bam.

Even the initial designs were different from what we had planned; we had designed traditional houses but according to the demand of the people some modern facts were inserted into the schemes: like an open kitchen which was not our suggestion but was applied in most of Bam's new homes based on the demand of the Bami people. Another fact that we had not taken into account was the division of land into pieces. We had designed the houses based on pre-earthquake large pieces of land, as big as five to six hundred square metres, but after the earthquake the lands were divided among heirs and were smaller. Another fact that we did not consider was the inwardness of new non-Bami residents. The amount of inflow of newcomers was considerable and has changed the homogeneity of Bam. The new Bam demographics were different from pre-earthquake Bam (the Head of *Naghshe-Jahane-pars*, winter 2010).

The increase in the price of material was another unconsidered outcome that affected reconstruction.

#### **7.4.1 Increase of the Price of Material and Inflexibility of the Reconstruction Policy**

One of the problems of the policy scheme was its inflexibility to the price increase in the building material. The initial loan for reconstruction was nine million Toman per household which later increased to fourteen million Toman including the grant. According to Saididkia (Head of the Reconstruction Bureau), at the time of the

earthquake the cost of building a house was one hundred and eighty thousand per square metre (*Etemad* newspaper, September 2009). Hence, for building a typical eighty five square metre house about fifteen million Toman would be needed ( $180,000 * 85 = 15,725,000$ ).

During the research it became apparent that a few months after the earthquake, despite the financial support from the State and international organisations like World Bank<sup>3</sup>, the price of building materials, especially cement and sheet iron, was increased. As early as the fall of 2004 (about one year after the earthquake) the supply of iron sheet decreased. According to an *Iran* newspaper on 26 November 2005, while the daily demand for cement in Bam was two and a half thousand tonnes the daily supply of cement in Bam had not passed one and a half thousand tonnes.

According to a report by Construction Engineering Disciplinary Organization of Iran (on February 2008), by 2006 the price of material has two to three hundred percent growth compared to the first year of earthquake. Based on this, the cost of building a house in 2006 would be two to three times more than the price of building a house in 2004. The inflation rate of Iran in 2004, 2005 and 2006 was 20.6%, 17.0% and 12.1% respectively (World Bank data). Hence, the initial loan for housing reconstruction would not be enough for those who were in the process of constructing their houses in 2006 and onwards. According to the Governor of Bam in an interview with *Hamshahri* newspaper (25 December 2006), three years after the earthquake, the number of completely built houses was fourteen thousand (which was less than half of the thirty three thousand demanded by the people).

Due to the inflexibility of loans and the rapid increase in prices, the time and speed of housing construction was of crucial importance for Bamis. One successful case in reconstruction was for a fifty seven year old Bami, the father of six children, who

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<sup>3</sup> The World Bank had provided a 220USD million loan for reconstruction in Bam, a large part of which was used by the HF to purchase materials for housing reconstruction (Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A handbook for Reconstructing after Natural Disasters, World Bank, 2010, p218).

had not lost any members of his close family. He started the process of building his house nine months after the earthquake and after two years he had completed it.

In another case, a Bami woman who had not lost any members of her close family, revealed that they had started reconstruction two years after the earthquake, and despite their house being completely built, the loan only covered fifty percent of the cost; the other fifty per cent from a personal budget. The construction of her house took two years.

In cases where people applied late (due to depression, mourning or for any other reason) or who faced technical or managerial problems, these factors decreased the speed of construction and the completion of the houses became difficult. Ali is one of the Bamis who after seven years of earthquake still lives in prefabricated unit. He is a teacher. In the earthquake he lost three hundred and fifty members of his close and distant relatives. This put him in deep trauma and he was unable to start the construction process during the early phases. Moreover, the plan of his land was designed incorrectly and this postponed the process of building. He was so depressed that even now after seven years, the construction of the house costs much more than the allocated loan.

To conclude, the blue-print approach which looked for standardisation and speed in projects increased the inflexibility and bureaucracy of the process. Loans were not in accordance with people's needs long term and left many Bamis in debt to the government without providing them with appropriate shelter. The timing of construction then became of crucial importance; those who started late had less chance to finish their houses especially if they had no personal budget to cover the expenses. This increased the vulnerability of Bamis in terms of their access to shelter and sense of security and livelihood.

Box 7.8. Because of the loss of my loved ones I was too depressed to start the reconstruction in the early months. After a few months, I started the process of application and construction of my house, but because of the fault of the contractors a part of our time and budget was wasted. As time passed, the price of material increased and my loan was totally spent without the completion of the house. Now I live in prefabricated unit with my family and am in debt to the government for the loan. There is no money, no house, and no hope for finishing my house.

Box 7.9. I live in a prefabricated unit with my four daughters. The contractor took the loan, built the house up to the completion of foundation phase, and ran away with our money. I put a case against the contractor but it was ineffectual. Now the government expects me to return the loan completely. Some of my colleagues in the cultural heritage organization of Bam had suggested supporting me financially to finish my house (A forty year old man, 2006)

## **7.5 Seeing the Housing Reconstruction through the eyes of Thirty Seven Bamis**

To better understand the view of Bami people in relation to their surrounding more in-depth interviews took place with thirty seven of the Bami residents. Interviews took place in 2010 and interviewees were selected randomly through the encounter of the researcher with local people. They were met by chance in the streets or public social spaces like the bazaar. The theme of the interviews were: coping capacity of the interviewee: i.e. how long after the earthquake they had started rebuilding their houses and relationship to the level of depression (i.e. how many members of the households were killed by the earthquake); the affluence of the households; the numbers of members of the household; their access to networks that would increase their access to resources (i.e. what resources they used in reconstructing their houses

beside the governmental and formal aids, what informal institutions or agencies eased their way through their access to resources, how the process of rebuilding the houses increased their networking capacity and made them connected to different organisations or agencies). Another theme in the interviews was the notion of social self/sense of belonging of the residents to the new Bam. This was explored through the following indicators: their view about the new Bam; the effect of reconstruction on the shape of their houses, palm groves, and social spaces; and views on who was the key figure in reconstructing Bam. To get a clearer view about their interpretation they were also asked to briefly reveal their opinion about the reconstruction process: advantages and disadvantages and their role in the reconstruction.

A fifty seven year old respondent, the only interviewee that started the rebuilding of his house four years later stated:

Due to the depression I was experiencing after the earthquake because of the loss of two of my children, I started the reconstruction process of my house too late [four years after the earthquake]. Hence I had trouble in applying for loans because the deadline for the application had almost passed. Finally I succeeded in benefiting from the loan and a contractor was allocated to rebuild my house. The contractor was unprofessional and because of his mistakes the work got suspended for a while. After this problem was resolved the reconstruction started again, but not much later, the contractor, who was not Bami, left Bam for good. I tried to finish the house by myself but we had run out of budget and the house was left unfinished.

This story reveals that the central role of the contractor in reconstruction made the reconstruction success very contractor-dependant: if the contractor was professional and responsible the process of reconstruction of the house would be easier but if the contractor was irresponsible or unprofessional it would bring about problems.

Through the in-depth interviews, it was revealed that sixty percent of the interviewees' households that failed to finish the building of their houses blamed their contractors for the failure. The other forty percent indicated that the increase in the price of building material was the reason for the suspension of the building process. Seventy percent of the interviewees did not consider the application process for loans and its amount problematic or deficient. In fact, forty percent of the interviewees mentioned the loan (i.e. its amount and process of allocation) an advantage of the reconstruction, thirty seven percent did not find any positive factor in reconstruction, eleven percent mentioned the quality and shape of governmental and official buildings as the positive side of reconstruction; others had miscellaneous ideas about positive factors. As the negative factors: twenty two percent mentioned the contractor-centred nature of reconstruction of houses, twenty two percent mentioned the irresponsibility and fraud of local officials like members of the City Council and municipality, 22 per cent mentioned the increase in the price of building materials, twenty five percent mentioned the marginalisation of people in decision-making, others had diverse ideas including the ugly façade of the city after six years, bad supervision of the reconstruction process, and inaccessibility of the city structure for disabled people.

Based on the above data, it can be concluded that the interviewees were unsatisfied with the malfunctioning of the contractors, irresponsibility of local officials, increase in the price of material and the marginalisation of people in decision-making. These factors could leave a negative effect in their sense of self-governance and their ability to change their surroundings. The factors that they had least control over (like the price of material and the malfunctioning contractors that were allocated by *setads*) had great influence in their dissatisfaction towards the reconstruction programme and their failure in accessing shelter. While local government could play an active role in easing such problems and lobbying for people, because of the malfunctioning and weak performance, local government was mentioned as one of the negative factors of reconstruction by the interviewees. The positive factor about this attitude towards the local government is that there is an expectation by Bami resident and people to believe in the institution, just not in its members.

**Table 7.1. Satisfaction of thirty seven Interviewees of Reconstruction Process**

1. The main reason for not finishing the reconstruction of the houses of those who were still living in prefabs:	Percentage
Fraud contractors	60%
Increase of the price of building material	40%
2. Positive points about reconstruction	Percentage
Mechanism of distribution of the governmental loans	40%
None	37%
Using good material and design for governmental buildings	11%
Miscellaneous	Others
3. Negative points about reconstruction	Percentage
Marginalisation of people in decision-making process	25%
Irresponsibility and fraud of local officials	22%
Increase of the price of building material	22%
Contractor-center nature of reconstruction of houses	22%
Miscellaneous	others
4. Have the size of the house changed compared to before the earthquake	Percentage
House got smaller	78%
No change in size	15%
House got bigger	7%

**Table 7.2. Networking, Key Figures and Sense of Belonging**

1. Has any long-term linkage been created between applicat ions and officials to be used for future help	Percentage
none	89%
2. Who was the main actor in reconstruction	Percentage
Housing Foundation	40%
Bami people	11%
Foreign NGOs	11%
Central government and Bami people	11%
Miscellaneous	others
3. What organization or person helped them financially	Percentage
None	30%
Martyr Foundation	3%
Sport Organisation	3%
Foreign NGO	3%
Cousin	3%
4. Damage to the Palms	Percentage
Palms have been damaged seriously	40%
Palms have been partially damaged	20%
No comment	others

In answering the question: Who do you think was the main actor in reconstruction in Bam, forty percent of the interviewees answered ‘the Housing Foundation’, eleven percent answered Bami people themselves, eleven percent mentioned foreign NGOs, eleven percent stated the central government and Bami people together, seven percent said the Ministry of Housing, and others had various opinions: One interviewee mentioned the Iranian people's donations along with the allocation of the National budget and foreign NGOs and another said "No one, Bam was built haphazardly, though I cannot say it is built yet". The fact that most people stated that the Housing Foundation was the main organisation active in the reconstruction of



Bam can be accounted for by the fact that the Housing Foundation was in charge of the implementation of the "designed-in-Tehran-by-Tehrani-Professionals" plan. This plan focused on the reconstruction of houses and retail stores. There was no organisation or plan for regeneration of businesses and livelihood improvement. Reconstruction was defined as rebuilding the destroyed buildings including houses, official and governmental buildings and retail stores. The budget, consequently, was channelled to cover those expenses. Presenting HF as the main actor of reconstruction by a high percentage of interviewees shows the central nature of reconstruction. It also implies that, to people, reconstruction of houses are of the greatest importance. This highlights that housing can be a vehicle for improving participatory projects in future plans and programmes.

Regarding networking, 89% of interviewees indicated that no long-term link was created with any agency organisation during their application and the process of reconstruction of their houses. In one case, the interviewee stated that "the links were created but there was no use of the links, no one was responsible enough to do their job properly or help us dedicatedly". Or as another interviewee revealed, "The process was too formal and bureaucratic that informal connections became useless".

According to another respondent: "To get an answer from the governmental organisations and *setads*, you had to make visits to the organisation twenty times in order to succeed in having one direct contact with the officials".

Another respondent stated:

Local officials like the governor or the members of the City Council were not professional to give us any help or advice regarding the reconstruction of our houses. The members of *setads* and others that could help us regarding the reconstruction of our houses were always out of contact; they only made weekly or monthly visits to Bam from other parts of Iran and usually were not there to answer our questions.

In order to realise what social linkages the interviewees benefitted from during the reconstruction they were asked what organisations or people helped them financially. Thirty percent stated no one, three percent mentioned the Martyr Foundation (since one of the members of that household was a martyr from the Iran-Iraq war and they could benefit from the Para-governmental Martyr Foundation), three percent mentioned The Sport Organisation since he was a teacher there, one person mentioned foreign NGOs since he was disabled in the earthquake and that NGO focused on helping the disabled, one person mentioned her cousin, and others mentioned the governmental loans as their sole financial source.

As a result of the reconstruction process, which could have been a good opportunity to create links between people and officials, such connections among the interviewees' sample community were not made. The reason for that was the marginalisation of local organisations in reconstruction. Another reason can be the high death toll caused by the earthquake that damaged the pre-earthquake social links (including neighbourhood connections and family ties) to a great extent.

The research came across some evidence that some households with social linkages were more successful in reconstruction of their houses. The researcher encountered two workers from the citadel who had similarity in terms of their personal and social access to resources: they were both the head of households of large families, and they were both in their early forties and both had the same job. In both cases the loans were not enough and the contractors had left the project due to lack of budget. One of the workers had asked his co-workers to help him to finish the building of the house. At the time of the interview, the house was close to being finished but the other worker was still living in a prefabricated unit with his four daughters.

In terms of the feeling of sense of belonging of the interviewees, two factors were prominent among their stories: change of forms and size of houses and damage to palms. The loan for reconstruction was designed for sixty to eighty square metre houses. Middle class Bamis used to live in 120-150 sqm houses before the

earthquake. Moreover, there were loans allocated for newly-wedded households who were not house owners before the earthquake. These two resulted in more but smaller houses. Seventy eight percent of the interviewees mentioned their post-earthquake houses got smaller than their pre-earthquake ones. Fifteen percent of the interviewees mentioned no change in the size of their houses and seven percent mentioned their houses got bigger.

Our house has got much smaller. We do not have spaces that we previously had like stores and dining area. Bami people have large families but the rooms and especially the kitchens are designed for smaller households and have become a lot smaller and we are in inconvenienced (One of the interviewees).

Palms were of great importance for Bami people since palms need great and long-term care and were one of the main characteristics of Bam. According to one of the interviewees, palms were important resources in Bam. Forty percent of the interviewees believed that the reconstruction process caused severe damage to the palms and twenty percent of interviewees believed that the reconstruction partially damaged the palms and palm groves. Their main reason was: replacement of palms with houses especially by young and newly-wedded households.

Bami households used to live in one big house together with their in-laws and siblings, but the reconstruction policy changed this tradition: they now live in separate houses, so the number of houses increased which resulted in being cut off from the palm-groves.

Another respondent stated:

New generation does not value palms; they think they are more hassle than benefit. In cases where parents died in the earthquake and the palm-grove was inherited by their children, they tried to change the use of the land from

groves to residential to build new apartments and sell them. To achieve this ambition, they let the palms dry out or even, I have heard, some had the groves intentionally burned down to get legal permission to change its use.

Comments like "the city has got ugly, pre-earthquake Bam was beautiful and full of palm-groves" was common in the interviews.

The city is not the Bam that I once knew. It's like entering a new city (One of the interviewees - a Bami woman in her fifty's)

The following section explores in more detail the effect of reconstruction to the sense of belonging by residents from Bam.

## **7.6 The Reconstruction Effects on the Sense of Belonging of People in Bam**

One of the most important social factors that the earthquake affected was the sense of belonging by the Bami people. Due to the large scale of physical destruction, places and people that Bamis had memory and felt safe among were lost. One Bami asserted that due to the earthquake, more than three hundred of his close and distant relatives had died. Neighbourhood networks were damaged as well. The reasons cited were: the death of the residents, replacement of the houses of many residents especially those who did not own their house formally, and of the influx of new residents to Bam. This means that the social network that a Bami used to communicate with and define himself through vanished at once.

The incident of newcomers increased the feeling of insecurity and alienation of Bami people. During the field visit and through completion of questionnaires and life stories it became clear that the Bamis believed that after the earthquake the city was filled with residents from the surrounding villagers (whom were referred to as *Narmashiri*) to take advantage of loans for reconstruction. They believed that many of these newcomers' submitted false data to show that they were Bami, owned land

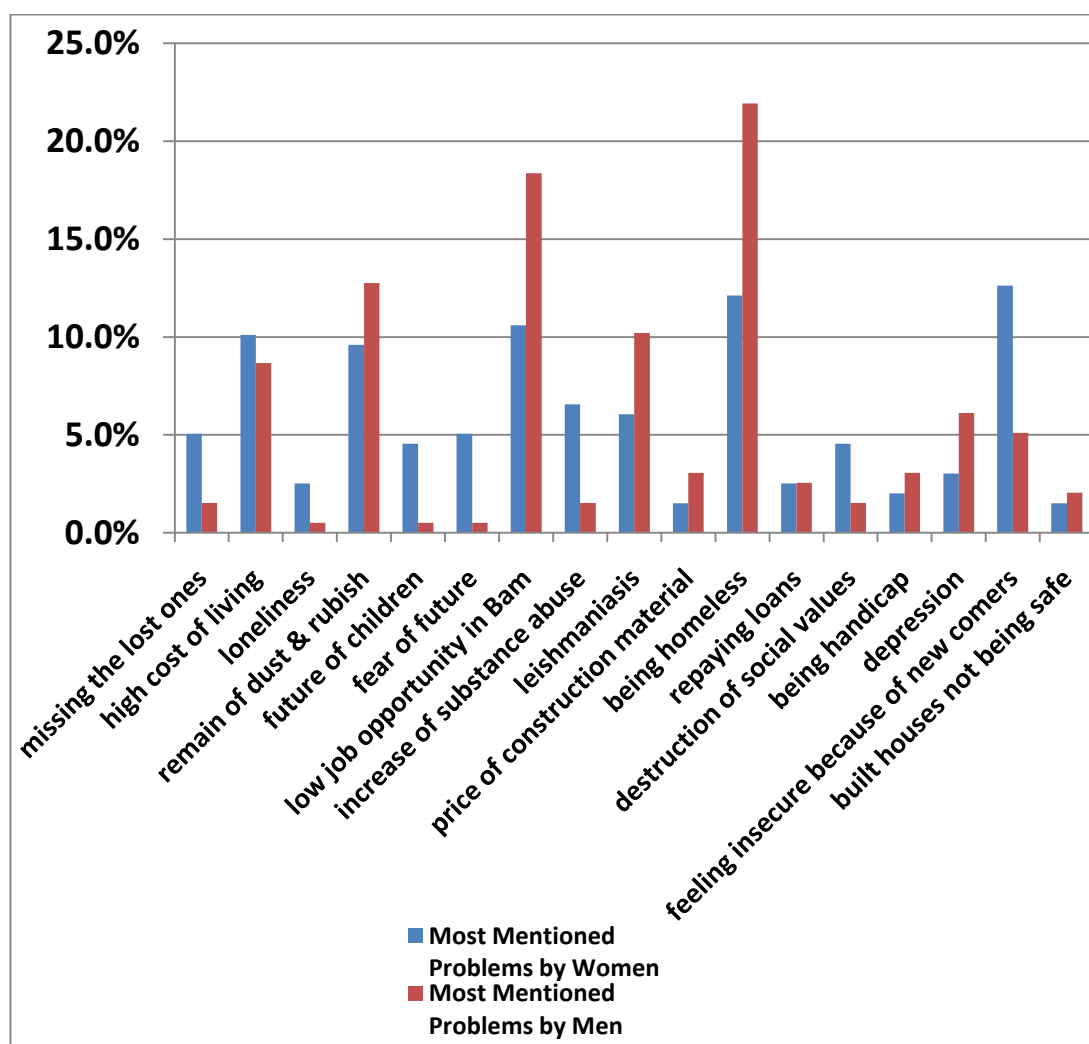
before the earthquake, but benefitted from loans while many Bami people were not granted loans because they were in too much in trauma to apply on time.

To find out the most prominent problems people faced because of the earthquake and reconstruction the local bulletin of Bam was studied. The local bulletin *Shahrvand-an-va-mosharekat*, reflected the problems expressed by local people through many interviews. For six months (from January 2004 to July 2004) the bulletin continued its activity publicising people's problems. This research has categorised the problems by gender and the severity of each problem based on the number of times it was indicated. Two hundred and eight people were interviewed and three hundred and ninety four problems were mentioned. After categorising the problems it was established that all three hundred and ninety four problems can be classified in seventeen categories (Table 7.1).

The most prominent problem was fear of being left homeless. Most of the interviewees who mentioned this as the main problem were among the landless people. Some of them were afraid that they may not meet the application deadline. The second problem was low job opportunity. In many cases people mentioned that non-local people had stolen job opportunities away from the Bamis. They also mentioned that no effort had been made in reconstruction regarding job opportunities for Bami. The remains of dust and rubbish are another fact that has increased Bamis' anxiety. According to most of the interviewees, the streets of the city were not very different from the early days after the earthquake. Waste was all around the city which resulted in the increase of leishmaniasis disease (the sixth most concerning issue in Bam according to the people). The high cost of living was the fourth most mentioned problem. Low job opportunity and loss of capital in the earthquake put Bamis in difficult situations regarding livelihood. The fifth prominent problem was the feeling of insecurity because of the existence of newcomers. By newcomers they did not mean merely *Narmashiris*, but they also meant the labourers who had filled the city. Most interviewees who mentioned this as the most prominent problem added that burglary had increased in Bam.

Men and women had different views in prioritising prominent problems (Tables 7.2 and 7.3). Being homeless and low job opportunity were more serious problems for men (21.9% and 18.4%) than for women (12.1% and 10.6%). Women felt more insecure because of non-local people (12.6%) than men (5.1%). Fear of the future, especially the future for their children and loneliness were more felt among Bami women (5.1%, 4.5% and 2.5% respectively) than among men (0.5%, 0.5% and 0.5% respectively).

**Figure 7.1: Most Mentioned problems by Bami men and women in 2004**



**Table 7.3: Most severe problems of Bamis in 2004 (descending and in percentage)**

<b>W+M</b>	<b>Problems</b>
17.0%	Being homeless
14.5%	Low job opportunity in Bam
11.2%	Remains of dust and rubbish
9.4%	High cost of living
8.9%	Feeling insecure because of newcomers
8.1%	Leishmaniasis
4.6%	Depression
4.1%	Increase of substance abuse
3.3%	Missing loved ones
3.0%	Destruction of social values
2.8%	Fear of the future
2.5%	Future for the children
2.5%	Repaying loans
2.5%	Being disabled
2.3%	Price of construction material
1.8%	Built houses not being safe
1.5%	Loneliness

Moreover, Bamis believed that after the earthquake the new community does not install moral values. Of the most mentioned problems printed in the local newspaper, destruction of pre-disaster social values was one of the prominent problems that people mentioned.

People do not care for each other anymore; anyone is looking for its own benefits and not for collective achievements; people are not kind to each other, real Bamis have either died or left the city, city is in the hands of *Narmashiris* (A Bami man in his late thirties, 2006).

The vulnerability of Bami people in terms of livelihood was another factor that disconnected Bamis from their pre-disaster social sphere. They could not afford their pre-disaster life-style, family gatherings which were routine in Bamis' life-style decreased substantially because it was unaffordable. Weekend vacations to the countryside were cut because it was not considered reasonable anymore.

Weekends were spent with another ten to twelve families either gathering at each other's house, or travelling to surrounding cities. But now there are not many relatives left to visit. Those who remained are too depressed or broke to greet us. We do not visit each other even once a year. The weekend trips are also cancelled because we cannot afford the cost of fuel anymore (A Bami retired teacher, 2006).



Table 7.4: Most severe problems for Bami men and women in 2004

Men	Problems
21.9%	Being homeless
18.4%	Low job opportunity in Bam
12.8%	Remains of dust and rubbish
10.2%	Leishmaniasis
8.7%	High cost of living
6.1%	Depression
5.1%	Feeling insecure because of newcomers
3.1%	Price of construction material
3.1%	Being disabled
2.6%	Repaying loans
2.0%	Built houses not being safe
1.5%	Missing loved ones
1.5%	Increase in substance abuse
1.5%	Destruction of social values
0.5%	Loneliness
0.5%	Future for the children
0.5%	Fear of the future

Women	Problems
12.6%	Feeling insecure because of newcomers
12.1%	Being homeless
10.6%	Low job opportunity in Bam
10.1%	High cost of living
9.6%	Remains of dust and rubbish
6.6%	Increase in substance abuse
6.1%	Leishmaniasis
5.1%	Missing loved ones
5.1%	Fear of the future
4.5%	Future for the children
4.5%	Destruction of social values
3.0%	Depression
2.5%	Loneliness
2.5%	Repaying loans
2.0%	Being disabled
1.5%	Price of construction material
1.5%	Built houses not being safe

Paying attention to livelihood regeneration schemes has vital importance in reconstruction policies. It directly affects the new urban shape. In absence of a proper livelihood regeneration policy, many houses remained unfinished because the households could not afford the remaining process of the building. There were signs of alternative and new ways to access livelihood with available resources by local Bamis:

Many prefabricated units that were provided for Bamis in the transitional phase, and later were moved to their lands as an extra room, have got a new use these days. Many Bami households let them to workers and university students (One of the residents of Bam, 2011)

It is possible to marginalise local people in formal decision-making of urban planning, but local people have great power in shaping their surrounding in their favour, whatever the formal plan be. They shape their surroundings based on their needs and even affect the designed and formal policies and structure. A number of the non-local workers that came to the city during the reconstruction phase did not leave the city and remained in Bam. Some Bami households used these people in their farming businesses. They have merged into society and can hire the prefabricated units. However, in the long-term, they may become the marginalised vulnerable groups, the new *Narmashiris*.

Bamis also found alternative social places. One of the most visited places of Bam after the earthquake was the cemetery. This shows the strong bonding ties of Bamis with their families and the level of their grief. Due to the intensity of visitors, the cemetery has changed its feature from a grief space to a social gathering space. In a visit to the cemetery it became evident that the cemetery has become a sharing space for Bamis: they share their grief, memories and even food with each other. Compared to other parts of the city, the cemetery still looks like it did pre-disaster. People feel connected and as if they belong there. Papoli and Garagian (a couple

who studied the anthropological aspects of reconstruction in Bam) in an interview in 2007 asserted:

In reconstructing the approach of Bam designed by the State the emotional aspects of the situation were not considered. The focus of the approach was merely technical. People were still mourning and shocked when the debris was removed. *Setads* surpassed each other in a competitive way in this regard. Immediately after that, people were given designed blueprints of their houses with distinct measurements and a mission to apply for loans and construction contractor. The new bazaar had Arabic design and all houses had similar typical designs prepared in Tehran. The houses built in *dehbakri* had the same design of the ones in *dashtabad*, despite the fact that in *dehbakri* land was much more expensive. Even construction workers were not from Bam, they were either Afghani or from other parts of Iran. These had increased the feeling of being alien to the new place and unsecure among Bamis. In physical reconstruction of Bam what was missing was the taste and voice of local people. The best public space that Bamis met each other and still felt safe and familiar was the cemetery of Bam. That was the best place that Bamis could communicate with, not only for mourning, but even for dating: This had even become the meeting place for young boys and girls.

The researcher came across a woman taxi-driver - which was a rare and new incidence in Bam at that time (2007). She explained that because her husband had died in the earthquake and was buried in the cemetery she felt the only place she could find comfort was at the cemetery. As her house was in a neighbouring town it was not easy for her to ask family and friends to drive her to Bam every day. Finally she decided to learn how to drive and get a license - she realised that driving gave her a source of income. This woman stated that there were more women in Bam like her. This example shows that a sense of belonging and bonding ties to memories and spaces are strong incentives for people to overcome limitations and decrease their vulnerability.

A report by Zand-Razavi (2004) shows that a few months after the earthquake people in Bam showed an interest in recovering palm groves and fostering and collecting dates. Palm groves for Bamis were a symbol of Bam and reminded them of their responsibilities to their environment. Unfortunately after the earthquake, because proper attention was not paid to them, many palm groves were destroyed either during the process by replacing them with new houses, or by letting them dry. This was done by new owners who wanted to change the functionality of the land from farming to housing for financial benefits. The dates of Bam that once were the most famous dates in the world are now mostly blighted. "Palms were the capital of Bam, but they went through substantial damage since the earthquake. For that the city is losing its identity" (A Bami man, 2010). Paying attention to factors that intensify a sense of belonging is important in increasing voluntary participation.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed how the reconstruction policy of Bam affected the social structure and sense of belonging of the residents. It was argued that the reconstruction policy, despite being labelled 'participatory' by designers and decision-makers, it actually marginalised local residents from being able to shape and govern their surroundings. Participatory parts of reconstruction for residents were seen through applying for loans, contractors, and providing building materials. Based on the reconstruction policy, the people benefitting from the facilities of reconstruction were people with land, and being in a good condition to apply for loans. This shows the desire to restore the *status quo* situation pre-disaster. However, this approach increased the vulnerability of people more than their pre-disaster situation. This was in contrast to the expectation of local people; their expectations were security, less control over their construction process, more involvement in the process, job, public spaces and not letting non-local people benefit from the construction benefits in an opportunistic way. Vulnerable groups, in terms of land-holding title and capability, widowed women, renters, informal dwellers, and women with absent husbands, were left susceptible. The experience of Bam showed that

divorcing community links especially in large scale projects decreases the effectiveness and appropriateness of mechanisms for targeting local vulnerability.

For Tehran-based decision-makers reconstruction was letting people build their houses which in practice turned to building houses for people. This makes reconstruction an application process from Bamis demanding shelter, and not letting local people interfere "too much". This increased the inflexibility of the housing projects and along with the increase in the price of material put the local residents often in difficulty in terms of access to proper resource and services.

In this chapter, it was also discussed how reconstruction affected the sense of belonging by the local residents. To do this, two sources were used: secondary data from a local newspaper and in-depth interviews with thirty seven residents of Bam. For the interviewees, the most prominent problems of the housing reconstruction scheme was the malfunctioning of the contractors, irresponsibility of local officials, increase in the price of material and the marginalisation of people in decision-making. The interviewees mentioned lack of local social contacts to help them to solve future local problems. Additionally, after the earthquake, houses became smaller and people felt many palm trees had been damaged, this, along with unpaved streets created a feeling of alienation of Bam's residents to their surrounding, which was not the case pre-earthquake.

Through using the secondary data, at the early phase of reconstruction, the most disturbing problems of Bamis were fear of being left homeless, low job opportunity, the remains of dust and rubbish in the streets, the high cost of living, feeling insecure because of newcomers, and leishmaniasis. While most problems mentioned by men were: the fear of being left homeless, low job opportunity in Bam, the remains of dust and rubbish in the streets, and leishmaniasis; most of the women mentioned problems of fear of newcomers mostly as labourers, being left homeless, low job opportunity and the high cost of living. To summarise lack of access to shelter, livelihood and security were the top fears of the Bami residents during the early

stages of reconstruction. However, there were signs of new coping strategies in Bam; prefabricated units are used in many cases as sources of income. Newcomers are regarded as work force by the Bami residents but there is also the threat of them becoming a new vulnerable and marginalised group.

## Chapter 8

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# Evolution of Civil Society in Post-earthquake Bam

### 8.1 Introduction

The scale and breadth of activity of NGOs in Bam during reconstruction was a novel experience not only in Bam but also nationally. Involvement of NGOs in the governing of the reconstruction of Bam was a great opportunity for Iran's civil society to practice participation. Not only in terms of contesting social structures for power and a stake in governance, but also in confronting the limits of its own capacities and competences in dealing with the social environment of Bam post-disaster.

Civil society is often regarded in development debates as a concept that contributes to a more just distribution of power:

"[Civil society empowering approaches] challenges the apparent power relations in society by recognizing the control that certain individuals and groups have over others. This is based on the recognition that those who wield little power have limited opportunities to express their interests and needs and are generally excluded from key decision-making processes, and that their knowledge is considered insignificant (Kothari, 2004, P142).

Many contemporary development theorists call for greater equity in the distribution of power through development (see chapter three). Concepts like the state, caste structures, clientalistic relationships, and western cultural dominance are seen as legitimate targets for civil society's struggle to advocate for or enhance the position of marginalised groups. NGOs are conceived as catalysts for a move away from hierarchical systems of government towards potentially more resilient and inclusive systems of governance (Pelling, 2003).

In case of Bam the arena for local and especially international NGO for activity was limited by the state. Following the opinion of Habermas it is the role of the state to create such an atmosphere for participation that people from different social categories could practice action cooperation and mutual understanding. In the absence of such mechanisms a Foucault-style dynamism between the state and grassroots communities and NGOs are expected to change the governance system towards a more balanced distribution of power. However due to the deficiency of local active NGOs and grassroots movements, and the political, financial and technical limitations of national NGOs, the attempt to achieve a more balanced structure of power through a Foucault mechanism becomes a matter of question.

This chapter studies how NGOs involved in the reconstruction of Bam applied concepts such as an active civil society, social determination and social inclusion –



ideas not in the mainstream of Iranian politics. It asks: what were the aims of NGOs? What were their incentives? What was their recognition of empowerment? How far did the reconstruction of Bam become an opportunity for the evolution of Iranian NGOs? How far did Iranian and northern NGOs, *setads*, city council and Bami people collaborate? Who was influenced most by the efforts of Iranian NGOs? How did they change the governance structure?

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first Section studies the role of NGOs in the relief phase of post-earthquake Bam. The earthquake of Bam and the vast extent of damage attracted many volunteer groups from all over the world to help the victims of the earthquake. Their activities at the early stages are noteworthy. The second section discusses how these NGOs at the later phases of reconstruction tried to connect to the local community and how they affected the structure of power. To address these questions, NGOs can be classified into three forms based on their system and perception of empowerment: traditional NGOs, new forms of NGOs with focus on enriching social capital, and appearance of local NGO. A section about the activity of foreign NGOs and international agencies and their relation with Iranian NGOs will follow this. The final section explores the main focus of Iranian NGOs – women and children.

The data of this chapter were gathered through different interviews and studying published documents. Choosing the NGOs was based on their activity and scale of work. Social activists, researchers, and academic staff who had experiences and knowledge about the reconstruction of Bam were approached and they introduced some NGOs whose activities were relevant to the research. Snowball sampling method was used through different contacts and NGOs to get access to more key informants and enrich the research. UNICEF and UN-Habitat were also studied. To study their activities, visits were made to their branches in Tehran and Bam.

## 8.2 Bam in the Relief Phase

It has to be noticed that when we talk about civil society activity in Bam, three geographical areas are involved: the region of Bam (comprising of the cities of Bam and its neighbouring city Baravat and some small villages), the city of Kerman (the capital of the province that Bam is located in), and Tehran. Unlike other prominent disaster case studies such as the Marmara or Gujarat earthquakes (which were sufficiently urbanised to have a history of active civil society), the city of Bam before the earthquake was a semi-urban semi-rural area: it had about one hundred thousand residents before the earthquake which distinguished it from rural areas but achieved its identity from its palm groves, orange orchards and date farms and had an almost homogeneous society influencing its character as an urban area.

After the earthquake Bam became a field for reflection of mainly Tehran-based, some Kermani, a few Bami and foreign NGOs. About ten to twelve NGOs of the total thirty three Iranian NGOs that entered Bam after the earthquake, had demonstrable experience in disaster relief, and the rest were young with little experience of responding to disasters. Ninety percent of the NGOs were involved in Bam because Iranian citizens trusted them and gave donations to be used in Bam, despite having no specific plan how to spend the money (Ekhlaspour, 2005). Many of them later became involved in more specific activities mostly working with women and children in educational activities.

Based on a study by Ekhlaspour (2005) on twenty six Iranian NGOs who worked on the Bam earthquake response, the central branch and origin of fourteen of them were in Tehran, five were from Kerman, two based in Bam and five from other cities of Iran. A Japanese NGO's staff from Kobe also noted this multi-polar organisational character of NGOs active in Bam:

"During the two stays in Iran we visited several international and local NGOs in Tehran, Kerman and Bam... [We entered Tehran on Jan 25]. On Jan 26<sup>th</sup>

[2004] we had a joint meeting with several local NGOs and individuals in Tehran...on Jan 29<sup>th</sup> we left Tehran for Kerman and a meeting was held with Kerman NGOs House and the joint team of Technisches Hilfswerk (THW)...subsequently we left Kerman for Bam. In Bam we visited two tents of local NGOs...on Jan 31 we left Bam for Kerman to attend a meeting with international and local NGOs held by Kerman NGOs House. On Feb 1 we left Kerman for Tehran. On Feb. 3rd a workshop was held for members of a young organisation...we shared our experiences from Kobe. On Feb. 4 we left Tehran for Japan"(Okano and Atsumi, 2004, p171).

According to the Kerman-based NGO House and UNOCHA (United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian affairs), within days of the earthquake more than eighty international relief organisations and NGOs from about sixty countries arrived in Bam to provide in-kind and monetary contributions (Okano and Atsumi, 2004). However, most of them had left Bam by mid April after three months of operation (ibid).

While the earthquake was the initial shock to the Bam region, relief and emergency activities can be regarded as the second shock to Bam. Due to the huge impact of the earthquake on human and physical losses and great coverage of the media, Bam became over crowded by the surge of NGOs and people offering relief supplies, which in turn brought another flow of people from unaffected regions also demanding aid.

"Relief supplies were enthusiastically but inefficiently distributed and injured people were transported haphazardly to the neighbouring city of Kerman for medical treatment in cars, vans and even rubbish trucks...people from neighbouring areas went to Bam and started to steal their fellow countrymen's belongings from among the debris of the city... genuine survivors of the earthquake found that their immediate needs were not being

met because of the rapid influx of poor people from the surrounding unaffected area claiming relief food and goods" (Aghabakhshi, 2007, p349).

Due to the influx of non-local people to the area, pre-existing norms of trust and reciprocity were stretched and eroded among genuine survivors<sup>1</sup>. Their previous social networks (family networks, neighbourhood networks, and even citizenship networks) were largely lost. In such situations it is of great importance to create a supportive atmosphere for affected community members to organise and collaborate with aid agencies and social workers. It is often argued that it is beneficial for non-local volunteers and NGOs to partner with local networks to help in the needs-based distribution of goods and services (Blaikie *et al* 2004; Maskery 1989).

"Bonding, solidarity or social cohesion provides the basis for reciprocity and exchanges within the social groups. But when the power and resources of these social groups is limited bridging or linking social capital with other groups becomes important to access different resources, information and power "(Narayan et al, 2004, p1184).

In the case of Bam, due to the high death toll, there was hardly any locally active civil society with almost all government social workers having lost their lives (Aghabakhshi, 2007). Hence it became almost completely the job of outsiders to help survivors mentally and with financial support to overcome the catastrophe. For this they had to get familiar with local knowledge and needs. Many problems of the relief phase came from this lack of a link between people's needs and the services provided.

In such circumstances it becomes the role of governmental and non-governmental organisations to become involved and address the needs of the most vulnerable. Aghabakhshi (2007) describes the immediate short-term relief operation as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapters six and seven.

"Adding to the inefficiencies of some of the Iranian governmental agencies was the fact that administrative staff rather than volunteer professionals were being used in the field. Many of them operated under the belief that injured people were unable to make decisions for themselves. They did not act as advocates for the survivors and ended up working contrary to their wishes on occasion. For example many of the survivors particularly women and children required toiletries and other hygiene products but were given food instead, much to their frustration" (p350).

Many of these problems could have been avoided had a strong local voice been available to help the volunteers in distributing goods and services. This might also have helped distinguish local people from opportunists and better manage the huge influx of non-local people. Bami people have blamed the outsiders for an undermining of social values, a decrease of the sense of security, an increase in the feeling of alienation to the city among local Bamis, and an increase in social distrust<sup>2</sup>.

After the earthquake people were accommodated in tent-camps which were organised by the Iranian Red-Crescent across the city. These camps became very beneficial for NGOs and volunteers to communicate with each other and with people.

"At the emergency phase all NGOs resided in camps. This eases our situation to communicate and meet people and other NGOs and present our services and find proper help seekers" (a volunteer respondent, 2010).

In terms of Iranian NGOs, though most of them were inexperienced in disaster situations they learned to work with local actors (Boxes 8.1 and 8.2). At the beginning they operated independently of each other and of the government. Together with the chaotic situation (Box 8.3), this resulted in a discordance of

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<sup>2</sup> See chapters six and seven

services and goods with needs and discrimination among survivors. For example it was reported that baby nappies were distributed among all tents regardless of the existence of any baby in the tent (Akhlaghi, 2005).

As time passed, NGOs started assessing needs and tried to approach the most vulnerable (Box 8.4). Gradually people were settled and things became more organised with the establishment of an agency to coordinate the activities of NGOs to prevent parallel services. According to Goda and Shaw (2004) such coordination problems at the time of emergency are frequently reported in both developed and developing countries. UNICEF, UN-OCHA, WHO and Iranian NGO Task Force were the most prominent organisations in coordinating the NGOs:

Box 8.1. "After a while I noticed that young ladies were still wearing black as a sign of mourning for their loved ones. I asked them when they would consider the end of the mourning time and they said that in our custom usually senior people would offer us light color cloths as a sign of end of mourning time. I communicated with some of the senior of the tent-camp to end the mourning time by offering the light cloths (which I had provided) to young women. A few days later most of the young ladies of the tent-camp had changed their black cloths" (A Tehrani social worker in Bam, 2011).

Box 8.2. "My aim was to make all people especially the most vulnerable to communicate with each other and socialize. We started our task from the tent-camps. We invited the people of the camp we resided to gather at each other's tents and share their problems. We faced cases that resisted participation. For example there was a lady who had lost one of her feet who did not participate. We told her that this week we are gathering at your tent; she was not determined enough to say no. We forced her to participate. Sometimes we tricked people to participate; for instance there was an old lady who would not communicate with other people of the camp and spent all day in her tent. I asked one of the boys to play with a ball outside of her tent while I was talking to her in her tent. While talking to the lady I often asked the boy to be careful with the ball; this way I was making the lady concerned with the boy who was playing. While I was leaving the lady I asked her to watch the boy not to disturb people with the ball. After a while a group of boys joined the boy to play with the ball. She supervised the boys and was in charge of the ball. Since then the front of the lady's tent became the playground of the boys of the camp; she was in charge of the ball and through that communicated with the children and other people of the camp" (A Tehrani social worker in Bam, 2011).

Box 8.3. At the time of the earthquake I was a social worker at Welfare Organization of Tehran. My subject was psychotherapy. We were sent by the state two days after the earthquake. I went to Bam with fifteen students of social care. The city was totally devastated. We went to the Welfare Organization center of Bam and found it totally destroyed. We settled there anyway. We started to find the lost children and gather them in our place. But it was useless. There was no secure space to keep the children and they used to run away. I saw that under that situation I can be of no use, hence I returned Tehran. Three months later I was invited from the department of health and psychology to join them in Bam. My experience in Bam started from then (A Tehrani social worker in Bam, 2011).

"Shortly after the earthquake UNICEF organized weekly child protection meetings among active NGOs working with children in Bam. For the first three months the meetings were routine and active but later they became occasional. There were also UN-OCHA meetings and also Task Force weekly meetings which was a governmental organ to report the activity of NGOs. But as soon as Bam passed emergency phase and entered temporary shelter phase, the meetings got infrequent. One of the reasons for that was that at the beginning of the reconstruction there was a possibility for NGOs to do parallel activities and also their activities and objects were ambiguous. But after a while each NGO's categories and fields became clearer and got on with their jobs, keeping the links with each other but needless of weekly meetings (a member of NGO Swiss Academy for Development, 2010).

Along with the creation of links to other NGOs through coordinating organisations and with the end of the emergency phase, some NGOs started to create links with local communities. As Shaw (2003) rightly argues activities of NGOs and voluntary organisations are successful when they are coordinated and rooted to the people and community. Studying the ways these links are created is of great importance since it relates to the outset of change of the distribution of power and the situating of Bami residents in their new environment.

Box 8.4. "I was a member of Yari NGO in Tehran. Our objects were fighting against substance abuse, HIV, and hepatitis. After the earthquake we added a new subject to our activities as: natural disaster. We entered Bam on the second day of the earthquake. It was absolute chaos. In Rudbar earthquake the army would not let us enter the city in early days of the earthquake, but in Bam the situation was out of control. We set up our tent at the place of one of the health centers, which was totally ruined by the way. Initially in the early days we helped in distribution of goods and food among people. After a few days we started assessment. We studied how many households had small children, infants, pregnant or breastfeeding women. After recognizing those households we provided them with milk, cheese and eggs. This was our plan for over six months. In the meantime we had collaboration with international organisations namely WFO and UNICEF" (The lady in charge of Yari NGO).

### 8.3 Connecting the NGOs to the civil society

Bami people were approached by NGOs in different ways. The methods NGOs used can be studied through their epistemological constructions of society, based often on the time and environment in which they were organised. In the case of Bam, NGOs can be categorised into three types: traditional NGOs which had a top down view and followed a charity style (i.e. giving money and services to a selected group of deprived people) method and were totally independent from the government (especially in terms of their definition of the problem); they tried to cover the gaps that the state was failing to address.

The second group determined participation of their target group as a priority. This group believed in the empowerment of society and sought policy change through educating people about their civil rights. They were familiar with recent discourses of social capital and in their projects tried to strengthen networking for long-lasting social and economic improvement. They invested in the active participation of citizens in public projects as a tool for empowerment.

The third type consisted of one prominent local NGO that was founded by a Bami affected individual. This case is valuable in indicating the significance of



indigenously and the affluence of its organiser on strategy and outcomes. These facts fostered its sustainability and local accountability. In June 2011, about seven years after the earthquake, the organisation was still active. The fact that the founder had lost his closest family members in the earthquake and used his own money to run the projects instead of being dependent on national and international donors, characterises it as an organic organisation without Western or Tehrani perspectives on civil society. This organisation is valuable in terms of being created as a claimed space for participation rather than an invited space formed by external actors:

Cornwall (2002) realizes two spaces for participation: invited and claimed. Invited space is created by development agents in a formal and ordered way to create forum for stakeholders to reach a consensus. Claimed spaces are those which evolve in an organic way and are created by powerless to gain stake and is usually conflictual (Desai, 2008, page 47).

Here these three types of NGOs will be studied in detail.

### **8.3.1 The First Group: Traditional NGOs**

These NGOs are charitable service delivery groups, called ‘traditional’ because they have a long history in Iran. Their objective was to financially support vulnerable groups, mostly single mothers and children, in Bam.

According to these traditional NGOs, vulnerability was considered as a lack of access to basic resources due to the social structure that was imposed on the target group, like the fragile social image of women in society, limited employment opportunities, and the physical and social weakness of children preventing their self-reliance. The group’s approach to vulnerability reduction was to find short term solutions such as providing livelihood assets, shelter, cash, and school places (Boxes 8.5 and 8.6).

Box 8.5. The House of Mother and Child is an Iranian non-profit NGO established in 1990 following the devastating earthquake of Manjil, North of Iran. They supported 550 post-earthquake orphans of Manjil by providing education facility and twenty houses for households in need. In the aftermath of Bam's earthquake, based on the experience of Manjil, The House of Mother and Child focused its activities in Bam on children who have lost one or both of their parents in the earthquake of Bam. Four hundred children were chosen prioritized by their level of need to be financially supported. The households are selected from the Iranian National Organization of Welfare (as is the legal process for all NGOs active in family support projects). Children's family would get a fixed amount of money each month (minimum of 20 thousand Toman equal to 14 pound per month) for each children and the organisation often cover occasional expenses of the families like buying computer for children or small costs of construction of their houses. Three pieces of land were donated by the local people to the charity for its family support purposes: in one piece the office of the organisation was built, in another one sixteen 60 m<sup>2</sup> type houses were planned to be built to accommodate sixteen female headed households, and in the third one twenty eight 85 m<sup>2</sup> type houses are built to accommodate another twenty eight female headed households. Houses are built totally with financial support of private donors. The houses composed a gated development with twenty four hour porter. Among the youngsters, four young boys were elected by the staff to act as the mayors of the development in charge of cleanness and gardening. Moreover, once a month, the residents will have a meeting with the head executive of the charity and staff to talk about their problems.

Their activities in Bam did not include lobbying and advocacy for change of policy or legislation for social vulnerable groups. Their view was: until the state solves problems like legislative reforms for women and the creation of jobs, they consider it their duty to provide basic facilities for affected Bamis. Their methods were paternalistic and they created a relationship of dependency between the beneficiary and the NGO.

Despite their traditional approach there were signs of networking and creation of social capital among the leaders and participants of these groups. In the case of the House of Mother and Child, their project of accommodating single mothers in a well-built gated development is prominent. Despite the distrust single mothers initially had towards each other at the development, social ties intensified as time passed. During the first research visit, which took place in spring 2008 at the inauguration of the project, signs of distrust among the new residents were observed. Some of the residents felt superior to others and did not let their children go out and play with other residents' children. Another household claimed that at night a great number of households leave their properties; she claimed that they have other places to go and only remain there during the day time for staff to see them and benefit

from foods and goods distributions; she was afraid that the empty houses might make the development more insecure at night (despite the existence of porters).

"Now we are here, we have a shelter but I don't trust neighbours. I have told my children not to make friends with the children of neighbours, now that I know how dangerous is the Bam after the earthquake and now that I have gone through this much harshness to keep my children away from damage, I won't risk entering new people in their lives" (one of the residents of the development expressions at the first visit).

Box 8.6. Banouye Bam (the Lady of Bam) was an organisation set-up in Bam by a Kermani woman in 2005. The target group of the organisation was young single mothers. Mrs Akhlaghi (the founder) started her activity in Bam in the early days after the earthquake through transferring the aid gathered by her friends and relatives to Bam. She had no experience in running or participating in any NGO; she was a retired teacher from Kerman in her fifties. Her sense of sympathy made her reside in a tent in one of the camps provided for affected Bamis (like many other non-local volunteers) with other Bami earthquake affected people and do whatever she could in relieving their pain. Camps were helpful places for volunteers and NGO staff to communicate with people and also to get familiar with each other. Mrs Akhlaghi got acquainted with IRAC NGO in the emergency phase. IRAC (the Iraqi Refugee Council) was an NGO supported by ACT Netherlands (Action by Churches Together).

IRAC left Bam at the end of winter 2004 and gave responsibility for distribution of the remaining aid to Mrs Akhlaghi. Mrs Akhlaghi decided to use the remaining budget to organise a workshop for single mothers to learn sewing and sell their products. Seventy Bami women participated in the project. In summer 2005 with inauguration of the workshops and completion of the IRAC budget the formal link of Mrs Akhlaghi and Banouye Bam Organization with IRAC terminated. Since then Banouye Bam became a Bami organisation run by a Kermani manager. According to Akhlaghi it was at that time that she decided to transfer the organisation from a charity style workshop to cooperation; she believed Bami women participants could become the shareholders of the organisation and Banouye Bam would become totally local and she could leave Bam for good.

It took six months for her to accomplish this task. Two factors accounted for the lengthy process: first the bureaucracy and second the problem of finding a new manager. None of the participants or Bami people she knew accepted to get the responsibility. The reason was that the organisation had no success in finding a market for its cloths. Finally at the end of the winter 2006 she found a volunteer and left Bam for Kerman.

Through the author's second visit, one year later in summer 2009, it was observed that links of trust among neighbours had been created and the residents had a higher sense of security and happiness:

"Here we feel safe and comfortable. Our children are more relaxed and happy. Our expenses have also decreased: we pay no rent fee; neighbours often share food and transport expenses. Here we do not feel alone or helpless, if I do not come out of my house for three days one of the neighbours will come to see if there is a problem. We have more hope to live. We asked the founder to organize courses for us to read Quran and learn working with computer and now we participate in the courses. We feel more relieved and empowered" (one of the residents of the development, 2009).

Through the creation of horizontal bonding ties with each other some of their expenses like food and transport were reduced and they gained a higher sense of security: they shared food and taxi. However in the absence of vertical ties with other organisations their livelihoods and solidarity depended on the sustainability of the host organisation. The House of Mother and Child has a strong leader with high controlling power and access to affluent families in Tehran to support the project. Being a lady with religious commitments she has a high level of accountability among the foundation's beneficiaries. But the organisation is highly dependent on her activities and the sustainability of the organisation depends on her commitment to continue the task. Consequently, the residents' reliance on this organisation could increase their vulnerability. To increase the sustainability of the project, the House of Mother and Child could create vertical links with other formal and informal organisations to facilitate women's active participation in other social and formal networks.

Dependency on the leaders is further exemplified through the NGO Banouye Bam (The Lady of Bam). Despite its humane incentive and valuable efforts, this group suffered from the same top-down approach coupled with fragile access to funds,

which threatened its longevity. During this project, which focused on empowering Bami women through the creation of a sewing workshop and cooperative, none of the participants were sufficiently empowered to develop leadership skills or to take on the responsibility of managing the cooperative and running it after the founder left. Instead, another outsider was given the project to take over and manage.

In such projects, while the 'outsider' may have come with good will to reduce the suffering and vulnerability of the poor, imposed leadership diminished local and personal capacity. At a minimum such projects are lost opportunities and only maintain the existing power asymmetries in society. Worse, some participants may see the programme as being run by the outsider for their own interests. As long as such a situation exists it becomes challenging for the target group to trust the project manager. In terms of social reconstruction, without the creation of a link of trust, a sense of belonging is less likely to develop amongst the participants. The participants see the programme merely as a source of income rather than a space to share, feel safe and evolve.

"More than one year of the establishment of the organisation had passed. One day I got a call from the governor that some of the ladies working in Banouye Bam had put an accusation against me. They claimed that I had got money from the municipality for ladies' transport but did not share the money with them; which was not true. In another case, some of the ladies claimed that some of the women were given sewing machines and others were not; but the fact was that the sewing machines were given by a donor for newly wedded ladies. Such skepticism was common among Bami people who were supported by NGOs, one of my colleagues told me that I do not even dare to visit a dentist or go to a restaurant because I may be accused of using the Bam's budget for personal use " (Mrs Akhlaghi, 2007).

Banouye Bam also suffered from limited fund resources. According to Edwards and Hulme (1996) the dependence of any NGO on external funding is something of an

Achilles heel. After IRAC's budget had been fully utilised the organisation relied on income from the selling of the products produced at the workshops, which had little success during Mrs Akhlaghi's presence. Banouye Bam is no longer an active self-run organisation.

In another NGO, Ehya, the leader had long-term experience in social work. He started working with disabled communities in the 1980s and expanded his activities to cover other socially vulnerable people, which resulted in the establishment of the Society for the Protection of Socially Disadvantaged Individuals (Ehya) in 1999. Ehya in Tehran is a well-known organisation financed through people's donations.

Ehya provided goods and services to a number of people in Bam (Box 8.7). Female-headed households, young women and orphaned children were the main focus of Ehya's activities. The services provided were minimal and lacked any significant long-term impact on participants' underlying capacities. A sizeable piece of land was donated to the charity, which was used to run a small nursery and sewing and computer courses (with 133 women graduates at the time of interviewing). Female empowerment efforts like sewing and computer courses; the provision of a cooking herb dispenser; and oven for baking bread to sell had failed to address the livelihood vulnerability of the beneficiaries. The main reason was a lack of demand for such goods in Bam.

Box 8.7. Ehya (the Society for the Protection of Socially Disadvantaged Individuals) is a non-governmental and non-profit Iranian organisation that started its activities in Tehran in 1999 to support socially disadvantaged people affected by poverty, prostitution, homelessness and divorce. Their activities in Bam started soon after the disaster by providing shelter, hand-washing facilities, safe drinking water, warm clothes and blankets (Ehya's official website). After emergency activities, the focus of Ehya turned towards the most vulnerable groups namely children, female heads of families and young girls. Ehya provided protection to a number of children who had lost one or both parents and supported their families to prevent further family separation. Female heads of households were provided with vocational training, income generating programs and income-generating programmes such as sewing classes and computer studies. Ehya also cared for a number of handicapped individuals. One charitable individual donated a house built on 2500 square meters in which Ehya established its headquarters. Their activities included provision of rehabilitative equipment including wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, casts, bandages and canes; counselling and psychological support to tackle trauma for earthquake affected people; thirty six orphans were selected to be supported financially by sending them remittances on a monthly basis; establishment of a Technical and Professional Learning Center offering computer and sewing classes for disabled, orphan and female-headed households; providing income resource for female headed households through giving them vegetable dispenser to sell vegetables and a furnace for baking and selling bread.

"Bami women do not buy dried or prepared herbs from us because they are mostly traditional housewives and are used to preparing their cooking herbs by themselves" (one of the respondents).

Despite this, at the time of the second interview, in the summer of 2011, Ehya was still active in providing these services. In the absence of a planned and coherent livelihood regeneration scheme and high unemployment rate, any income generating activity from NGOs would be welcomed by vulnerable residents.

### **8.3.2 The Second Group: Investing in Social Capital**

The second classification of NGOs differs from traditional NGOs in encouraging the active participation of beneficiaries in its projects. This group realised the potential disadvantages of top-down approaches and was focused on empowering Bami

people through investment in social capital. However, since NGOs in Iran do not receive open financial and political support from the state, they were mostly dependent on the donations from foreign donors and private Iranian agencies. Three projects will be discussed here: the Empowering Project of the Blue Crescent, Poshtrood and the Citizens in Participation Bulletin.

### **8.3.2.1 The Empowering Project of International Blue Crescent**

International Blue Crescent is a Turkish NGO with experience of post-disaster activities. It became active in Bam in the early months after the earthquake (Box 8.8). The staff used trust as the main driver for creating incentives among participants. They created links with local people through living with them in their own ward under the same situation they were living:

"At the beginning it was hard to communicate and attract the trust. Residents were reluctant to participate because of fake promises some NGOs had made but failed to fulfil. Moreover, because the area had a reputation for drug dealing and prostitution, residents were afraid NGOs and governmental organisations might report them to the police authorities. In this regard, two to three weeks were spent on situating ourselves in the community and gaining their trust. Our team, tried to use local people for knowing the area.

The object of this project was to realise the problems of the district, prioritise them and have the residents solve them themselves. To start, meetings were arranged in the house of residents to make the connections. At the beginning it was hard to gather them; we had to knock on each door every time to ask them to come. It was also hard to establish the purpose and concept of these meetings for them since it was new to them. But after three months, people welcomed these meetings and tried to follow them themselves. Residents asked each other each time to participate and not to miss the meeting. However, it was not without challenge: women and aged people were much



more willing to participate than men and youngsters. One reason for that can be the addiction (more general in men than women) that reduces their sense of responsibility. Another reason was willingness of women to come out of houses and lack of public spaces for them to go. These meetings created a safe place for them to gather and talk" (one of the Tehrani staff members of IBC, 2007).

Box 8.8. International Blue Crescent (IBC) is a Turkish NGO initiated in 1999 in cooperation with the United Nations World Food Programme providing humanitarian relief all around the world to improve lives of people suffering in disadvantaged parts of the world (from its official website). The organisation utilises its experience gained in post earthquake activities from the devastating earthquake that hit Marmara, Turkey in 1999. In the aftermath of the Bam earthquake IBC entered the field immediately. First steps were delivering food packages, blankets and cloths from Turkey. In August 2004, IBC inaugurated a rehabilitation and community participation project in one of the most deprived areas in Bam called by the inhabitants as the "Black area" (*Siah-khooneh*). A team of four young members shaped which two of them were from Tehran, one from Kerman and one from Bam. The aim of this NGO was to communicate with the residents, gain their trust to participate and gradually empower residents to claim their rights and run the ward by themselves.

Gradually along with connecting people to each other, the group tried to connect people to their environment – to build on the sense of belonging and association with place. They encouraged them to take responsibility for their ward and ask for proper service from formal organisations, but the IBC's method was paternalistic:

"Problems were gradually identified and solved by the people. IBC helped the community to become active in reconstruction through debris removing. Trucks were hired by the organisation and residents removed the debris. Another problem was the toilet. The government had built a big public toilet and bath to be used by the residents; at the time people were still in tents or prefabricated temporary shelters and did not have proper access to a private toilet. It was especially a danger for women because of a lack of privacy. With another NGO private bath containers were provided and distributed in the community. Another issue was the garbage collection. The street was

insecure at night and the municipality rarely collected garbage. Moreover, though the ward provided waste bins, the bins were often stolen and attempts to place new bins failed. Heavy bins fixed to the ground were provided by IBC to help the garbage problem of the ward" (ibid).

"Since making men and youngsters participate was hard, we focused our participation project on women and children. For women, sewing classes were established. The first series of sewing trainers became sewing teachers of the next courses. For children, a children centre in the local park was established by IBC. Significant negotiation took place with the municipality to gain permission to establish the children centre in the park. One of the local girls was trained as a teacher to run the centre and classes were started for free with one free meal for children. The park transferred from a centre for drug addicts to a centre for children. Children now had a safe place to play instead of being locked in prefabricated temporary shelters or playing in insecure streets" (ibid).

IBC failed to act as a sustainable organisation. Because it was a foreign NGO, officially it had limited time to operate in the field. For the long term sustainability of its projects an indigenous organisation was needed with incentives and funding. IBC failed to create or find such an organisation and subsequently left the field in 2005 and its projects were suspended:

"Children centre and women sewing classes lasted for one year and a half. The teacher's salary was cut and it was hoped that the teacher will continue her job voluntarily. IBC decided to gradually finish its projects in Bam and let people run it them themselves. To leave the city, projects should be given to another NGO still active in Bam or to the Government's Professions Organization (*Sazmaan-e-Fani-herfeh-ee*). IBC decided to give the centres to the Professions Organization. The Professions Organization closed the centres stated that the shutting down was temporary until we relocate it

somewhere else; this never happened. People learned to ask for their rights through rehabilitation and participation in the project. The residents provided a formal claim but their claims resulted in no satisfying answer. The children's centre was closed and the children from the Black area were reluctant to go to another kindergarten like those provided for UNICEF because of their marginal background they would be bullied" (ibid).

Activities of IBC in "the black area" (i.e. Hafezabad) resulted in some improvement in local participation of the residents of that area. Chapter six investigated this issue in depth and the results are available in that chapter.

### **8.3.2.2 Poshtrood<sup>3</sup>**

Poshtrood is a town near Bam with about two thousand three hundred residents. Eight hundred of its residents died in the earthquake. The main occupation is farming and mostly the cultivation of dates. According to a study by WHO of one thousand of the residents of Poshtrood, fifty percent of them did not own the land they were working on. Due to the earthquake many people lost their livelihoods, which were in many cases in forms of livestock. World Relief<sup>4</sup> targeted the women of Poshtrood for its community participation project. The project was rotating micro-credit to be spent on income creating activities. Through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach forty five women were initially involved in the project and they chose eight women from among themselves to benefit from the first credit based on the level of their access to a livelihood. With an increase in the number of members, they divided into groups of fifteen to twenty five; the groups were expected to be composed of people with most similarities in terms of social ties and objectives. Meetings were held once a week. Each participant would give a small amount of money to the group and sum of these small amounts of moneys would become a considerable amount

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<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that this research focuses on the activities in the city of Bam, the project of Poshtrood is included as a case which is influenced by the reconstruction's social movement and was one of the new approaches introduced to Bam in community governance.

<sup>4</sup> A Christian international NGO which equips churches to help victims of poverty, disease, hunger, war, disaster and persecution; it was one of the active NGOs in Bam

that would be the credit of the week. The recipient of each week's credit would be chosen by lottery; in other words each week there is a winner of the credit either by random or by the acceptance of all participants to dedicate the money to the most in need participant. The number of participants increased to two hundred and eighty three; twenty three percent of them were illiterate and twenty six percent had a college degree or higher. Seventy participants had no economic activity before the earthquake while one hundred of them were economically active. Less than forty percent had experience in social participation activities. Twenty women out of the forty five recipients of the credits used the credit for animal husbandry and thirteen of them, who had no economic activity before the earthquake, used the credit for starting an income earning activity. By spring 2011 the project was still running, through with decrease in activeness and the number of participants.

Poshtrood Project (Box 8.10), despite the decrease in its activeness after a few years, can be regarded as one of the more sustainable participatory projects in the aftermath of the Bam earthquake, and one that has influenced the life of its participants. All of the recipients of the micro-credit stated that they achieved a higher and more respectful position among their family members after winning the credit. Participants believed that these weekly meetings increased their social confidence and was a great source of social knowledge. They felt more confident and comfy in sharing their problems (Ekhlaspour, 2008).

There were also disadvantages about the project. Despite the fact that benefiting from credit was a great incentive for participants, after a while repaying these credits, which were in form of loans, became a matter of concern: "I become anxious on Wednesdays because I won a few times but was not able to repay the loans" (one of the respondents). Another participant said: "I bought a goat with my loan but the goat died and I have no money to repay the loan". Making money the incentive for participation increases the opportunistic and self-interest behaviour among participants and affects their sense of good will for all. Participants often claimed that the leaders of the group favoured their relatives and friends and disregarded the need of participants. Or in other cases they complained that winners, who were

supposed to use their loans for money raising capital like livestock, cheated and showed the goat of their neighbours' as their new asset. Another problem with the project was that marginal residents (a group of seasonal labourers called *Narmashiri* who move for work and are among the most deprived) had also often been excluded and became further marginalised within the groups. The *Narmashiri* are mostly illiterate; their communication skills are low and they hardly communicate even with each other. Their attendances in the meetings were occasional.

Poshtrood lacked the vertical ties with other organisations that could have increased access to recourse and information for its participants. Like the project of the House of Mother and Child, it became a gathering place for the most vulnerable groups: according to Della Giusta (2008), excluded and vulnerable members of communities need cross-cutting social networks to facilitate their access to legal support and other resources; having strong ties with people who suffer from the same lack of resources as oneself may not be useful and can even hinder social inclusion.

### **8.3.2.3 "Citizens and Participation" Bulletin**

This project aimed to organise neighbouring communities and link these to local formal and informal organisations. The means used was the publication of a local bulletin and the fostering of local journalists. The leader, coordinator and designer of the project was a university lecturer from Kerman. He, being a sociologist, along with his wife had long-term experience in practicing empowerment projects in Kerman. They had access both to local knowledge (since they were from same region) and scientific resources.

"My university degree is on social science and it is twenty eight years that I am researching on social subjects. I was familiar with the debates that UN raised regarding disaster management based on empowering civil societies after the earthquake of Kobe. Based on my studies I decided to apply a community based management approach. After two weeks of the earthquake

I designed a community-based management plan and offered it to the governor and city council of Bam through the Kerman University. I immediately entered the tent-camps where affected people were sheltered after the earthquake and was accompanied by the head of city council. This has increased my legitimacy and accountability in applying the task. We asked the citizens to choose two representatives from their neighbours, one man and one woman, to act as a link between them and the officials and transfer their ideas and problems to them. We were assisted by a Japanese NGO and they shared their experiences with us about Kobe. WHO also helped us in publicizing our activities through a local bulletin and organizing workshops for local people to get familiar with their civil rights and take civil responsibility and enter voluntarily to social space" (Zand-Razavi, 2005, p4).

This project was applied in two wards in Bam and a few wards in Baravat (the neighbouring city of Bam). The Chancellor of Kerman University presented the plan to the governor of Kerman Province (in which Bam is located) soon after the earthquake. The governor passed it to *Setad* and the plan was accepted to be applied temporarily and be tested in two districts of *Setad* (*Setad* had divided Bam into ten function districts to facilitate reconstruction). The plan started at a local level and a bulletin was published every two weeks to inform the participants about the project, opportunities and policies and to reflect their voice and problems. The bulletin was published in fifty two volumes (over one year). According to Zand-Razavi (2005) after the emergency phase when people got back to their houses and left the tent-camps the project was suspended. Despite the failure of the designed plan, the bulletin continued to be published and reflect the problems of Bam in general by young Bami journalists for some more months. With the end of the project, Dr Zand-Razavi diverted his attention to other projects like Poshtrood, and studies to create a child-friendly urban space in Bam with UNICEF.

### **8.3.3 The Third Group: The indigenous emergence of a Bami NGO**

#### **8.3.3.1 Hamrahan-e-Bam<sup>5</sup>**

Hamrahan-e-Bam was an NGO launched by a Bami individual who lost his wife and only daughter in the earthquake along with about one hundred of his relatives. The financial source of the organisation was the personal budget of the founder.

The target group of Hamrahan was single mothers who had lost their husband in the earthquake, children who had lost their parents and children who had drug addicted parents. In inaugurating this organisation Mr Sabzevari (the founder) was helped by a Tehrani lady who had long-term experience in social work.

Mr Sabzevari had a great incentive in helping reduce the vulnerability of Bami people. Almost all his family and friends had died in the earthquake, and those who survived left Bam after the earthquake for other cities. He was wealthy enough to run a good life in a big city like Tehran. But he had stayed and established the NGO. He is a religious and spiritual man who believed that if he is alive and has not been killed by the earthquake then there should be a reason for it. He believed he was given a task by God to help Bami people.

Despite being one of the wealthiest persons in Bam, after three years since the earthquake he was still living in a prefabricated temporary shelter. In explaining his situation he asserted:

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<sup>5</sup> As discussed in chapter four, section 4.5, NGOs in Iran can be categorised as traditional and modern; however, the importance of Hamrahane-Bam as an indigenous NGO that fostered after the earthquake made it hard for the author not to emphasize on it as a separate category. In other words, presenting it as a separate category was a way to show its importance. Access to more data was not possible due to distance, accessibility and time limitations.

"In the new city design of Bam the function of my land was allocated industrial by mistake. To amend the mistake I had to follow a long bureaucratic process. I made an appeal two times but both times they told me that my case was lost. Besides, the responsibilities and tasks of the NGO give me no time for such things".

Being an affected Bami who had lost his loved ones and lived in the situation that other Bamis were living under was a great incentive. This emotional and physical unity with those impacted also made it hard for him to see the bigger picture. The stress of loss and reconstruction period also resulted in a confrontational and emotional approach.

"When I first met Mr Sabzevari I found him very determined in his task to help vulnerable people especially orphaned children. But as an experienced social worker I noticed that since I had started to work with him he had not mentioned anything about his passed wife and daughter. Whenever there was a meeting between NGOs or governmental organisations he started arguments and disagreements. Even other organisations called him in an advantageous way to fight for them in their clashes with other organisations. He did not apply for work permission for the NGO. He said "I have no business with the government; I have enough money to follow my targets". I gradually approached him and encouraged him to share his pain. One night he suddenly told his story and started to cry for three nights. He got better since then but is still aggressive in his approaches. In a recent case I noticed he was very forceful in giving marriage consultation, which was not in his profession, to one of the Bamis he was helping" (Ms Dehbashi, a social worker and one of the members of Hamyaran NGO).

This case shows that together with a great incentive and source of funds, technical capacity and experience are important factors in creating a culture of rational negotiation and influencing the structure of power in the long-term. Aggressive



behaviour will create a behaviour of resistance towards the leader from different agencies and is an obstacle in creation of norms of reciprocity.

### **8.3.4 Discussion**

After the earthquake many national and international NGOs started their activities in Bam. Some were well established with previous experience while others evolved through the reconstruction of Bam. Some of the NGOs followed traditional methods of service providing for the vulnerable and some tried to encourage the activation of civil society through advocacy and building self-esteem among Bami people and empowering them to claim their rights to resources. Though theoretically these two groups had different perspectives on addressing the vulnerability, in practice the boundaries between these two groups on the ground was less clear. Some of the traditional style organisations succeeded in creating networks and increased the self-esteem of their beneficiaries, and some of the NGOs aiming to create organised civil society ended in merely providing short-term services.

The experience of national NGOs in Bam demonstrates that those NGOs that succeeded in creating vertical ties among people and different organisations and communities along with horizontal ties were more successful in transferring the sense of self-determination among Bami people and were more likely to survive over time. Funding has also been identified as a critical determinant of the longevity and success of NGOs. Another lesson that can be useful is the importance of leadership. While charismatic leaders are important factors in increasing the trust, reputation and success of NGOs, especially in making vertical links, it also makes them vulnerable since it can create a relationship of dependency between the leader and the NGO.

## 8.4 Foreign NGOs in Bam

Foreign NGOs in Bam can be divided in to two types. The first group was those who preferred to apply their assistance in financial form. Their donations were a political and humanitarian gesture. They financed construction of some new schools and hospitals in Bam (Box 8.9).

Box 8.9. Muslim Aid is a UK based NGO. After the earthquake of Bam one of my friends who was a member of Muslim Aid asked me to be their representative in Bam. Their object was to build a multi-purpose clinic in Bam. The project started two years after the earthquake. Despite the fact that Muslim Aid showed interest in helping Bam the project did not start till two years after the earthquake. The reason was they did not have the right link in Tehran. They did not want to be involved directly in Bam. At the time of the earthquake I was not in Iran. It was seven months after my arrival to Tehran that I got the offer. The project lasted for eighteen months (The representative of Muslim Aid in Bam, 2010).

The second group was those who had a policy advocacy intention. They applied their objectives through Iranian staff. Because of the problem of communication their main contacts were Tehran based young people who could speak English fluently but were often alien to Bami norms and values. The young Teherani staff often lacked the voluntary and humanitarian spirit needed for such activities and regarded their job as an opportunity to improve their resume as a worker of an international organisation. Even in their stay in Bam they were distanced from the affected Bami's situation. Staff members of many of the international NGOs had great negative effects in presenting NGOs in Bam in terms of their negligent behaviour:

"Despite the expectation one would have from United Nation as a great and experienced international agency, UN in Bam did not appear as effective as it should. Its members were mostly from western style Iranian families who were fluent in English but no experience with living in harsh conditions. The non-Iranian staffs were the least experienced and the most amateur. The

equal job opportunity as the fundamental of human right is not being applied in UN branch in Iran" (Mansourian, 2008).

"International agencies like UNDP, due to the fact that they had access to substantial budget, had lavish expenditure. For example for a simple workshop they had spent huge amount of money to serve their participants in a luxury style in middle of a devastated city" (a researcher of social consequences of Bam's reconstruction, 2010).

"When entering the field we [non-Bami volunteers] were ignorant of our alienation to the social norms of these people. UN especially has affected the Bami society in a negative way. For example, the average salary that UN gave to its employees was higher than other NGOs and much higher than average salaries in Bam. This has increased the expectation of workers; someone who had worked with UN could hardly get satisfied with other jobs or lower salary. Another example was applying western manner and style in the religious traditional city of Bam. While Bami women used traditional dress code and most of them use long black chador in public spaces, NGO workers (especially workers of foreign organisations) were negligent in covering themselves in a religious style. Many Iranian young workers of foreign NGOs looked at Bam's reconstruction as an opportunity to make links with international agencies for their future jobs and not as a place for humane volunteering place" (Manager of Yari NGO, 2010).

Another problem facing foreign NGOs that aimed to apply a policy advocacy approach was the need for organised grass-root Bami communities to communicate with and implement their projects. Such local communities were absent in Bam. Oxfam GB, for example, had a programme to increase the capacity of local communities. Initially the plan intended to implement through Bami community organisations, but since no proper local community was found, they decided to apply their project through a Tehran based NGO. But according to studies by Ekhlaspour (2005), since foreign NGOs had limited time to stay in Iran (at the end of the second

year after the earthquake they had to leave) the Iranian NGO was pressured to speed up the project that Oxfam had designed to encourage the community participation. But such projects needed time and patience. For that reason the Iranian NGO withdrew cooperation and suspended the project unfinished. Hence Oxfam's activities were limited to a few workshops. The limited time that the foreign NGOs had was a big obstacle and caused programmes to be short-term and mostly limited to the construction of public facilities.

Iranian NGOs, compared to foreign NGOs had a higher sense of volunteerism. However the higher wage levels of foreign NGOs created an opportunity for using reconstruction for self-interested purposes rather than social good. While some Iranian NGO staff tolerated the harsh situations to help Bami people and often spend even their pocket money on Bami people, local staff of international NGOs saw their situation as mercenaries who only had to accomplish the limited tasks they were given (Boxes 8.10, 8.11 and 8.12).

Box 8.10. "Foreign NGOs had higher marginal expenses. Their staff were more immoderate than national NGOs' staff. Staff of foreign NGOs expected better shelter, food and other facilities than workers of national NGOs. Workers of foreign NGOs had less volunteering spirit and altruism than national NGO workers. They were rather mercenaries than selfless volunteers. They lived in "Arge-jadid" a comfort gated development at the margin of Bam which was unaffected by earthquake. We as workers of a foreign NGO had less contact with local Bamis because we had resided in Arge-jadid. Our role in the field was different from workers of national NGOs. We had rigid schedules to follow; but workers of national NGOs were more flexible and could change their programmes upon change of the situations or with demand of the local people" (an Iranian staff member of Swiss Academy of Development, 2010).

Box 8.11. "Staff members of international NGOs were mostly upper class Tehrani dwellers who got used to a semi-western style lifestyle in Tehran. Being mostly young, they used to party and had night life in Arge-Jadid, where they resided in Bam. This not only increased the expenses of staff but also was in contrast with local values" (an Iranian staff member of IBC).

Box 8.12. "I gradually gained trust among Bami people. The fact that they realized I as a woman could live my life safely in Tehran at my home but am single handedly there living in tent tolerating harsh situation just to help them gave Bami encouragement and sense of being supported and cared. I realized that children had no place to play. I prepared a tent for children to play in and study. People were happy to send their children to my center due to the link of trust that was created" (representative of Iranian NGO Association for Protection of Child Labourers in Bam, 2010).

In Bam after the earthquake a group of Tehrani and foreign agents entered the field and brought with themselves a space that symbolised a special class membership and life-style with western codes that was distinct from the religious and less-urbanised people of Bam<sup>6</sup>. An intangible sense of power was hidden under their practices that created a sense among Bamis of being regarded as inferiors. This often resulted in alienation of Bami people towards these NGOs. But since most of the foreign NGOs left Bam after a few months of the end of the emergency phase (and at the end of the second year of the earthquake the remaining foreign NGOs were asked to leave) such behaviours did not result in long-term damage.

Another disadvantage of foreign NGOs was their lack of awareness of local knowledge, which increased their inefficiencies.

"Lack of local knowledge increases the cost and decreases effectiveness. In Bam UNICEF had distributed some expensive dolls among Bami children as a way to make them play and get happy. Many Bami mothers treated the dolls as precious properties and hid them in safe places. Many others claimed that they did not get dolls and demand for dolls increased. In one of the camps a Bami mother approached me and claimed that "my son has got depressed but he was not given any toys from NGOs" I grabbed some stones from the ground and started to play *haft-sang* [a local game played like

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<sup>6</sup> Based on the definition and opinion of Bourdieu (1986) about the power of class membership (see literature review)

marbles but with small stones]. I told her for making your son happy he does not need expensive toys, you can teach him how to play *haft-sang*" (Dehbashi, social activist in Bam, 2011).

"One problem with NGOs, especially foreign NGOs, was that they mostly did not use local Bamis as staff but instead used Tehrani workers. This did not cover their gap to local knowledge. Because of that in some cases they spent their funds on unnecessary goods and services. For example UNICEF spent a lot on buying PCs but a lot of them remained unused. Iranian NGOs were more influential in Bam in this regard than foreign NGOs. The reason was that they had better knowledge about the social norms and needs of Bam and could communicate better. But foreign NGOs worked from rigid instructions" (The manager of Iranian NGO: Yari, 2010).

One of the merits of Iranian NGOs was that they mostly used female staff in Bam. This facilitated communication with the most vulnerable, namely women and children, and created strong links of trust between NGOs and the people.

"When I entered Bam [from Tehran] on the second day of the earthquake, there was chaos everywhere. We were shocked when we got to the field. Our organisation was focused on child labourers of Tehran and we had no experience in disaster. We did not have any plan or structured program. We had collected money from people in Tehran but had no idea how were we going to spend it. Red Crescent gave us three tents. These with the money we had collected from people in Tehran were all I had to deal with the situation. We were lucky that one of the staff had a Bami contact. We were a small group of women. This was a merit in terms of gaining trust and because of that the contact who was a woman as well got comfortable with us and helped us" (the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

"I hired my first staff from local Bamis. My intention was knowing Bam better through a Bami and also through this way the cost of hiring the staff would be spent to a Bami. She was a woman who has lost her husband and child in the earthquake. I hired her as a teacher. This way she could help children and it also would be a healing process for herself" (ibid).

"My concern was mostly women and children. I realized that women did not have a public space to be comfortable and unveiled. Hence I ordered a large tent with capacity of two hundred people. I also hired a local gym teacher for children and a lady from Tehran to practice music with children. We even ran a small concert in a nearby city and even another one in Tehran. Concerts gave children self-confidence and enthusiasm. Because I was a woman it was easier for local women to trust me and communicate with me and leave their children with me" (ibid).

Despite the discouraging outcomes of many foreign NGOs due to their lack of local knowledge, their efforts can be appreciated for two reasons: their higher technical and financial capacities compared to Iranian NGOs, and the networking that foreign NGOs, especially UNICEF and UNDP, created among all active NGOs in Bam to communicate and share their experiences and resources, in fact many Iranian NGOs financed their projects through foreign NGO resources (Boxes 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, and 8.16).

Box 8.13. "We shared a project with a Japanese NGO. There was a great advantage in working with a Japanese NGO: it was a great source of learning. They were very organized and had long-term plans. Most national NGOs that we knew had far ambitious objects which were often not within their capability but Japanese' NGO objects were in small scale, practicable, functional and were applied successfully. The project we shared with them was focused on women. They suggested that we organize an art course for women making handcrafts. It was amusing for women and created a social space for them to interact and communicate. We developed our categories and added computer and sewing courses. Later we applied therapists to help them and let them share their problems" (the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

Box 8.14. "One common object in most NGOs was their focus on children. Hence they all needed professional and preferably local teachers. Here UNICEF came in assistance. It organized teaching courses for local volunteers. Through this process not only NGOs had got professional local teachers to employ but also it became a forum for NGOs to meet and share projects" (the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

Box 8.15. "UNICEF organized weekly meetings among all NGOs. In one of these meetings a foreign NGO approached me and asked if I could help them in conducting their resources to where it is most needed. I bought a small library for my center. Later it became a gathering place for mothers and children" (the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

Box 8.16. "Initially I was working with a Czechoslovakian NGO called "People in Need". In UNICEF gatherings I met deputy director of Swiss Academy and I was asked to join them. It was a pilot project to study the effect of sport on traumatic child to overcome trauma. We covered two hundred and fifty children" (one of the Tehrani staff members of Swiss Academy in Bam, 2010).

Despite being connected to each other through different non-governmental organisations, NGOs in Bam suffered from poor co-operation and ties with governmental organisations like the municipality and *Setads*. This fact not only created clashes between the local government and NGOs but also threatened the longevity of their projects. NGO staff indicated that while the governor and municipality could maintain security in the field (especially of women) they refused to do so (Boxes 8.17, 8.18, and 8.19):

"The government had different policies in dealing with national NGOs and international NGOs in Bam. There were limitations for international NGOs. The ministry of interior was harsh on them on giving permission to work in



Bam and there was lot of control on them. National NGOs did not have that problem. They were more emancipated. But non-Iranian NGOs had better access to financial and technical resources and were more experienced in the subject. This resulted in collaboration among national and international NGOs. Most foreign NGOs applied their projects through Iranian NGOs. The policy of the state to the Iranian NGOs was neutral: there was neither control nor support. The link was pale. Bam was divided into *setads* by the reconstruction plan but we had no business with the *setad* of our ward. It was hard for me to stay and work in Bam as a single woman. The governor was capable of creating security for me but it did not. They were all good in words in seminars and social gatherings but in practice there was no support "(the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

Box 8.17. "In an incident, due to the poor service provision in the camps, the water pipes were broken and the water covered the electricity cables which were damaged in some parts. It was a very dangerous situation. I contacted the electricity department of Bam but they said the service of camps does not relate to their activity area. I contacted the municipality and they said it is the responsibility of NGO's coordinating organisation. The contact with the clergy of Bam had the same result; he contacted the water supply department and they said since the water piping system of that organisation is not provided by us we have no knowledge or responsibility about that. I contacted Mr Zand-Razavi (one of the social activists and runner of the *shahrbandan-va-mosharekat* bulletin) and shared my problem with him. He published my problem in the local bulletin. But it was useless. We had no other option but to do the job by ourselves. The next day I and the participants started to dig a channel to divert the flowing water to the waste land at our nearby. Even the children were helping us in this task" (Founder of Banouye Bam NGO, 2005)

Box 8.18. "There was a park in Bam which could be a great place for children but instead had become a waste place and a center for substance uses to market drug. Its land belonged to the municipality and the plan was to change it to a social center. We as the staff of IBC did many liaising with the municipality to allocate the land to children as a nursery. After severe efforts we won the land and changed it to a play-yard for children. A Bami woman volunteered to be their teacher. The place changed to a nursery and was free. As long as we were there the children's center was active. But as soon as we left there the municipality started to build there a social center"(Tehrani staff member of IBC, 2007).

Box 8.19. There was a project that was given to us by UNICEF. It was an inter-provincial sport competition. The subject we were given was boys' football, but we also added gymnastic and tekvando for girls. For practicing we needed a place to exercise, but the municipality did not give us any place. They said because it was a UN project you have to ask them to provide you all the facilities including practicing space. If you want us to help, you have to direct the project's budget to city's sport section. We rejected to do so hence the project was suspended for a while. Later on we found an abandoned play yard in a destroyed school and started our practices there" (the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

### **8.5 Focus of most Iranian NGOs on women and children:**

According to Ekhlaspour's studies (2005) two months after the earthquake, thirty three Iranian NGOs had entered the field since the earthquake. At least seventeen of them had considered children in their projects (eight of them were solely focused on children). The next significant population that most NGOs covered was women. The interesting fact about national NGOs in Bam is that most were run by women and about eighty percent of the active staff in Bam were women (Ekhlaspour, 2005).

The large presence of women in the NGOs increased the sense of trust and comfort among vulnerable Bami women to participate in the projects. Women, especially single mothers, were the target group of most of the NGOs active in Bam either directly or through their children. Before the earthquake women of the Bam region tended to stay inside and were religious; social interaction with men other than their relatives and families was limited and women felt uncomfortable in such situations. Female activists from Tehran and Kerman were successful in approaching them and addressing their problems. Activities that national and international NGOs considered for this group were mostly sewing and computing courses.

"NGOs filled all over the city and a large group of them were focused on women; and almost all of them run computer and sewing courses which were

demanded by Bami women themselves" (the staff member of Swiss Academy of Development, 2010).

Are Bami women more powerful after the disaster? The following stories suggest that some improvement in socialising Bami women and addressing their vulnerabilities occurred during reconstruction:

"Women of Bam are much more empowered now. There are more women who work outside their home. There are more women in Bam driving cars. Women of Bam are more social these days. More than half of the sellers in bazaar are women now. There are more nursery and fast-food restaurants in Bam compared to before the earthquake which shows that women spend less time in kitchen and are more outgoing. This shows that Bami women had the potential to participate in social activities and even get the men's position. After the earthquake the traditional social structure of Bam changed substantially towards a more modern structure" (Papoli, 2007).

"One year after the Bam earthquake another city of Kerman province was hit by an earthquake. The first group that reached there even before the Red Crescent was people of Bam. Some of our NGO participants who were mostly Bami women also joined them to help. This gave our women sense of responsibility and sympathy. It also increased their self-confidence" (the lady in charge of the Association for Protection of Child Labourers, 2009).

"During my long-term contact with Bami people since the earthquake I realized that there were a group of Baluch women in Bam whose identity was recorded in no formal organisation. They did not have any birth certificate or identity card. Because of that they searched for social security and identity through marriage with Bami men. This had eased and increased the culture of polygamy among Bami men. The earthquake had created made them more vulnerable and at the same time created an opportunity for them to be seen. I

faced three cases in my activities in Bam that these Baluch women were in severe livelihood condition. One of them was a nineteen year old girl with children who had lost her husband in the earthquake. She could not benefit from any kind of social help from public and governmental organisations as a single mother because she had no civil identity. We were unsuccessful in our application for getting her civil identity since she had no birth certificate but after a few years of anticipation we succeeded to get her children legal identity certificates" (A Tehrani social worker in Bam, 2011).

"There was a lady donating money to our charity once a while. She was a wealthy Bami woman who had lost her family in the earthquake. She was so depressed and for that reason rarely would leave the house. We invited her many times to participate in our projects but she resisted all times. Once she provided food for Ramadan iftar, we asked her to help us in distributing the food among Bami people around the city. She accepted and joined us. She was surprised that we dare to enter house of people's we have no relation to. She realized communicating is much easier than she thought. Since then she gradually participated in some of our projects. Now she is an active member of our organisation and also one of the boarding managers" (A Tehrani social worker in Bam, 2011).

Increased power sharing at the local level may not automatically translate into increased power for women (Fordham 2003). Development and other initiatives cannot be seen as static events but rather as dynamic processes of social relations. Despite the efforts made to reduce the vulnerability of women after the earthquake there was no effort to involve men in increasing their awareness on gender equality. "Calls for integration are easy to make but integration is difficult to achieve on the ground" (Fordham, 2003, p70).

"Women of Bam are much stronger than before the earthquake. We see more women work, drive and take social responsibilities. Actually I believe the

city is run by women now. But the fact is our men counterparts do not take us seriously. Despite our social evolvement we face problem when it comes to formal applications and policy makings. For example if a man applies for a piece of land from the municipality it would be much probable for him to get it than if a woman apply" (a Bami woman active in Poshtrood NGO).

When we talk about gender we have to consider that gender-sensitive approaches should probe deeper into gender issues. Gender inequality is multidimensional. Femininity is hidden in deeper levels of the human arena: there is the feminine space, feminine mind, and feminine view of the world. In participatory discourses the involvement of women in development projects is insensitive to deeper levels of femininity. Women are expected to be involved in projects that are highly masculine. In feminine discourses it is highly encouraged to empower women in decision-makings through involving them in governmental and legislative decision making in highly masculine ways. The question remains whether empowering women equals distancing women from their feminine nature? If there are more women drivers or female workers in Bam does this mean they are more empowered? And if yes, in what regard? "The question is not 'how much' people are empowered but rather 'for what' are they empowered?" (Henko et al, 2001, P182)

"One of the chief dangers is that the rhetoric of integration and inclusion masks a largely technocratic concern; one that may advance incrementally but still fails to grasp the difficult challenge of the root causes of vulnerability at the social and political level" (Fordham 2003, p70).

Gender-sensitive activities of NGOs in Bam and the image that female NGO workers in Bam created made a channel for Bami women's voices to be heard. Studying their effects on deeper levels of femininity is important but does not fall under the remit of this research.

## 8.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored how post-earthquake Bam became an opportunity for national and international NGOs to practice how to be a part of urban governance in times of crisis. The relief phase became an opportunity for NGOs to enter the field and communicate with the local residents while later phases of reconstruction helped them grow. Based on the activities of national and international NGOs active in social empowerment projects three categories of NGOs were determined. The first group applied a top-down approach and regarded the effected people as victims who were unable to address their own needs. Due to that view these NGOs chose the most deprived households to provide them with goods and services. Their activities created a norm of dependency on the NGO. The second category tried to empower residents through participatory projects. This group achieved some success in the field. The third classification was an indigenous organisation founded by an earthquake-affected person whose activity in the field, unlike the other groups, had direct effects on his own life because he was trying to affect his own place of birth and residence. The chapter then examined the collaboration of foreign NGOs with Bami people and national NGOs. It was followed by a section that tried to see the problem of Bam through the eyes of these NGOs which appeared to be gender inequality. A considerable number of projects of NGOs in Bam were focused on empowering women. Iranian NGOs regarded gender-inequality as a more important social issue to be tackled than hegemony of class, religion, or state. There were also signs of disapproval from local and Tehrani people in Bam towards the application of western behaviour and dress code in the field.

In practice activities of different NGOs in Bam did not result in any political reform in the area. The municipality remained distant from Bami people and, as was observed in the previous chapter, was not empowered by the central government.

The empowerment approaches of NGOs in Bam did not result in any major economic and livelihood improvement among beneficiaries. Most NGOs applied a

paternal style in their approach towards the most vulnerable women and children of Bam which in turn created a relationship of dependency on NGOs. At the same time, limited resources constrained the longevity of many NGO activities.

There was no indigenous local demand for non-governmental organisations, nevertheless the earthquake created a huge supply of NGOs to Bamis. Most of the residents had no previous experience of NGOs or knew what an NGO could assist with. If Bami people had been informed of the potential of NGOs in parallel to their arrival or soon after at the commencement of reconstruction, they may have collaborated further or negotiated for better outcomes. NGOs at the best were successful in presenting Bami people an idea of a new form of governance, albeit in theory rather in practice.

"The activities of NGOs in Bam were very influential in institutionalizing these organisations in the region. I can say with confidence that Bam is the only city in Iran that its citizens are well familiar with NGOs and trust them. Such perception and trust cannot be seen even in Tehran" (Ekhlaspour, 2005, p7).

## Chapter 9

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# **Conclusion: Towards Better Governance to Increase the Social Resilience**

### **9.1 Concluding Remarks**

The intention of this thesis was to study the social resilience of Bam after the 2003 earthquake. The research aimed to explore how the city of Bam changed institutionally and characteristically after the earthquake. In this regard the research examined who the most prominent stakeholders in reconstruction of Bam were and how they interacted with each other. The following agencies were studied as the main stakeholders of reconstruction: the residents of urban Bam, the designers and planners of the reconstruction scheme, Housing Foundation (as the executive body of the reconstruction scheme), national NGOs, foreign NGOs, international multilateral agencies and the local government. Three empirical chapters analysed how these



stakeholders interacted and how their views, interests and efforts shaped the new structure of power in post-earthquake Bam. The research contributes to the concepts of NGOs, social capital, urban governance, civil society, participation, and vulnerability, which are all inter-related.

A study of the contemporary history (last two centuries) of Bam showed that the social structure of Bam was highly influenced by livelihoods and access to resources. The main economic activity in Bam was agriculture. Situated in an arid area, access to water had vital importance for Bamis. The scarcity of water created a society built around class, in which those who were in charge of providing and maintaining water distribution became upper class and petty farmers, who were reliant on the water distribution, constituted the lower class. Despite land and political reform in 1960s this class structure existed until the revolution of 1979. Access to resources, especially legal land ownership and shelter, was historically very difficult for petty farmers and seasonal migrants. Over time a marginalised group was shaped whose livelihood was highly dependent on their access to the bazaar of urban Bam. The social reforms that the revolution of 1979 invoked were influential in breaking the traditional *khan-rayat* (landlord and landless petty farmer) structure of Bam but were ineffective in addressing the vulnerability of this marginalised group's livelihood. Bam was regarded as an urban area due to its active service and industry sectors and large population; nevertheless it is highly dependent on agriculture.

Family bonding ties in Bam are strong and the average family size in Bam in 1996 was 5.2, which can be regarded as large families. The earthquake revealed that Bami people were more reliant on informal institutions than formal institutions in their everyday life. Informal housing and land occupation instead of formal legal permission, and a reliance on social links and trust in the urban bazaar were indicative of a society who felt independent of formal institutions and legal registration. There were even a group of people with no formal registered identity. Strong family ties and large families provided Bamis with a social structure that acted as a coping system in times of difficulties. There were cases where families used their bonding ties to survive the disaster and overcome their plight. However,

the earthquake largely destroyed this structure and revealed their social vulnerability. The reconstruction plan was designed on a loss-based approach in which the loss would be evaluated through a legal and bureaucratic process. Many families lacked the formal capabilities to access resources.

The government's loan giving policy weakened these strong bonding ties (intentionally or unintentionally) by giving loans to newly wedded households. The norm had been that young married couples shared a house with their parents, but the loans were also allocated for the building of separate shelters for the young couple. The level of independence between parents and their married children differed between areas; affluent areas had a higher level of independence, while deprived and old areas had a higher level of dependence. The reconstruction also created new districts with younger and more independent residents.

It can be concluded that post-earthquake Bam became less traditional and favoured young residents. This change was not intentional but the young residents, either as new comers or existing residents, had significant power in influencing the reconstruction of Bam; they appeared to be the main consumers of the reconstruction services. They had an important role in reshaping the new urban form of Bam by using the loans allocated to new wedded couples: the urban form of Bam changed from large mud-built houses in palm groves to smaller but more numerous brick-facade designed houses. New Bam also has more socially active women than before the earthquake, the number of female drivers increased substantially. There are more women running retails and they are seen more in public service providing positions like in banks, travel agencies and airport than before the earthquake. .

Reconstruction process of Bam had effects on the social structure of the area. People of Bam, especially women are more outgoing and social than before the earthquake. This change was not a direct outcome of governmental policies but occurred through the process of reconstruction: due to the demolition of houses and private spaces by the earthquake, people had to share public spaces during the emergency phase.

Consequently women had less privacy and had been forced to contact society more to get access to their basic needs. In some cases people were encouraged by some NGOs to spend less time in privacy and communicate more with their neighbours. In later phases of reconstruction, for better access to livelihood, some people rented their rooms or prefabricated units and shared their private spaces. Having less access to financial resources, to cut the expenses, many people limited their social relations with their families and family meetings and consequently family and relative bonding ties decreased. Moreover, the entrance of new comers from different regions made social structure of Bam more heterogeneous: complains of many Bami residents about the entrance of *Narmashiri's* or rural dwellers to the city shows that a new form of social structure is shaping.

The main body responsible for reconstruction was the Housing Foundation whose main objective was to provide shelter to existing landowners. The reconstruction plan for Bam designed by the Council of Architecture and Urban Development was based on three aims:

- a) Preserving the city's identity in urban design,
- b) Strengthening the new houses against earthquakes through the implementing the national building code, and
- c) Ensuring householders' participation in the process of rebuilding.

However, there was a greater focus on the façade and resistance of the buildings than on the participation of people in shaping their surroundings. There were efforts, nevertheless, to find a way to involve people as much as possible in the housing reconstruction process. The HF exhibited a number of built houses in different designs and invited people to choose their favourite design from the provided models. People were concerned with their ability to afford the construction by the loan, especially in the absence of an effective livelihood regeneration policy and

mostly chose the cheapest model. In a survey to determine the most prominent worries of residents of urban Bam in 2004 (as explored in the Participatory Housing Reconstruction Approach chapter of this research) access to shelter, low job opportunities, and high cost of living were among the top five. These results indicate that reconstruction programmes should expand into livelihood regeneration programmes to allow for a more encompassing approach to vulnerability reduction.

The focus on architecture and resistant buildings coupled with the minimal role of local people in reconstruction reduced any flexibility in the reconstruction approach. In order to build resistant houses based on the designed plan, the role of contractors increased. Consequently the extent of participation of people was limited to completing applications forms and providing building materials. Formally they were prohibited to intervene the building process. There were signs of irresponsibility of the contractors who failed to finish the building according to the allocated time and budget or in an opportunistic manner left the field with the loans that were allocated for building Bami people without completing the projects.

An increase in the price of building material was another problem that occurred during reconstruction phase. The absence of an effective control of prices of material placed many Bami households in a vulnerable situation. For many, especially those who did not start reconstruction in initial phases, the allocated loan was insufficient to cover the increased cost of materials, and led to only partially finished houses for many families. According to HF reports, by January 2009 sixty three percent of the total demand for new housing had been met and thirty seven percent had not yet been covered. If the plan had been designed in a more flexible way, such as enforcing fixed prices of building materials; an increase in the size of loans to match the higher cost of materials, or if there had been better supervision of the contractors, the number of unfinished houses in urban Bam may have decreased and more people could have received better access to shelter.

The Tehran-based professional planners were removed from the realities faced by the earthquake-affected population of Bam, which put already vulnerable groups in a more vulnerable position. The reconstruction policy was loss based rather than need based. Those groups who had insecure land-titles like tenants, migrants and informal dwellers were less able to benefit from the reconstruction services. The cultural and fragile legal position of women also put many of them in a vulnerable position: in cases where a man had married more than one woman and hence had more than one household, he could only apply for one of his households. Women whose husbands had left them without formally divorcing them also had problems in legitimising themselves as a legitimate applicant for a loan. Women whose husbands had died in the earthquake also faced problems since legally they could not inherit the land as it belonged to their husband. If there had been a local community that could communicate with the planners and make them aware of such situations, more people may have been able to benefit from the reconstruction and reconstruction in turn could have increased the social resilience of Bam.

The result of a central and professional biased approach was that not all three aims of the reconstruction plan were met. Active and encompassing local participation was neglected in favour of building resistant and aesthetically pleasing houses. The extent of the new houses resistance to earthquakes cannot be determined until another earthquake happens, but the aesthetical aspect of the new houses was not what the planners had in mind.

"What was implemented was different from what we had in mind. The huge demand for houses and the limited time we had to prepare schemes for twenty five thousand houses for people who were in instant need of shelter ended up in repetitious schemes. People were too desperate to pay attention and communicate with the schemes. Moreover, it was easier for contractors and *setads* to control and apply the projects in this way" (the head of *Naghshe-Jahane-pars*, one of the main designers of reconstruction plan, winter 2010).

Further, the approach negatively affected the Bamis' sense of belonging. The influx of workers from all over the country to Bam to do labour work has increased the sense of insecurity and alienation among Bami people and especially Bami women. The survey showed that Bami people did not find the new designs beautiful or desirable. The damage to palms during the reconstruction process exacerbated this feeling. Many people believed that the destruction of social and urban borders brought into Bam new residents who do not share the same moral values. Hence social trust in Bam has decreased.

While reconstruction could be an opportunity to empower local government and create essential links between people and local government and the local government and the central governmental, this did not happen in Bam. The local government was marginalised in decision-making, appeared weak in urban refurbishment, and a sense of distrust and dissatisfaction was observed towards the members of the municipality and city council.

The research showed that the efficiency of NGOs was correlated with their legitimacy and relationship with the central government; their understanding of the grass-root communities; their access to financial resources; experience in post-earthquake situations; and the level of trust and acceptance they could achieve from the target communities.

In Bam the state's distrust towards the activities of foreign NGOs meant the state restricted foreign NGOs' activities to only the first two years after the earthquake. This forced the foreign NGOs to focus on physical construction projects rather than longer-term social empowerment projects. There were also signs some foreign NGO staff disrespecting local values, which hindered the creation of trust among foreign NGOs and local Bamis.

Iranian NGOs did not suffer from the same issues; a number of Iranian NGO staff in Bam were women and most of these women respected, shared and valued the

religious beliefs of local Bamis. This was very helpful in the creation of trust between Iranian NGOs and the Bami target communities, especially Bami women. However, Iranian NGOs lacked technical and financial expertise or capacity: without sufficient financial support from the government's budget, many Iranian NGOs relied on their foreign counterparts to cover their expenses. With the suspension of activities of foreign NGOs in the field after two years, many of these Iranian NGOs became financially vulnerable. They also lacked the proper experience and knowledge for appropriate budget execution. Consequently, many of their empowering projects were unsuccessful in addressing the basic financial needs of their target groups.

The people of Bam felt highly connected to their unique surroundings; they were concerned about their palm-groves, their neighbours, and their city. They thought their city was beautiful before the earthquake and they believed the earthquake had damaged their identity and sense of belonging through the influx of opportunists from other towns and cities and labourers from across the country. The reconstruction scheme could have been designed in a way to involve people using their sense of belonging and experience in taking care of the palm groves, re-designing the urban areas, houses and construction. But the reconstruction plan was applied based on the provision of only shelter for Bami residents. The logic was that involving people in designing the plan would have been time consuming when people were in need of immediate shelter. The rationale behind the use of non-local labourers was that it was more efficient than using local people, who were mostly depressed and expect more wages for less work.

The result neither favoured speedy reconstruction, nor encouraged civil participation in urban governance, nor favoured the main designers of the plan. Due to the increase in the price of reconstruction materials, the houses took longer to construct than expected. In many cases fraud contractors received money from the applicants but left the building project unfinished. This increased the vulnerability of these residents who remained homeless and in debt to the government.

One of the main aims of the reconstruction plan was to preserve the identity and character of the city of Bam. However, reconstruction actually changed the traditional character of the city. One of the factors responsible for this outcome was the loan policy for newly-wedded couples, which resulted in more smaller houses. The large-scale development of smaller houses damaged the palm groves, with many trees and palms making way for the new houses. This shows that the designers did not see the plan through the eyes of Bami people and did not know what is important to them. This disconnection between the designers and new residents resulted in a new form of urban design that created the sense of alienation and dissatisfaction among Bamis towards their surroundings and the main bodies of reconstruction.

The author studied and observed the changes of Bam for five years, from 2005 to 2010. During this period along with the changes of the façade of the city, changes of people's behaviour and viewpoint were also notable. At the initial phases local respondents were more loud, emotional and demanding (from the government) in their responses. In later phases interviewees on average became more still and were happier to give short answers to the questions. In their eye-sight one could find signs of depression and loss of hope. However, in later years, in 2009 and 2010, the researcher spotted signs of dynamism and liveliness, especially in young women.

To finalise, it can be concluded that, despite all the shortcomings of designed policies, the new Bam is more resilient than before the earthquake. Due to the harsh situation of affected people after the earthquake and lack of an effective livelihood generation policy, people have faced their vulnerabilities and found alternative methods to increase their coping capacities in terms of either access to livelihood or getting over the social boundaries. Women precisely are now in more ease to communicate with strangers or their male counterparts and participate in social spaces.

Social capital has increased in Bam. The increase of social capital was not in form of norms of reciprocity or trust of people to each other: in chapter six it was realised



that residents of the studied districts have lost their trust to the new citizens due to the entrance of new comers; however, as it was found out in chapter eight, the trust of people to social spaces has increased along with social networking. It can be concluded that studies about social capital are better to be more precise in terms of definition of the concept. Social capital is generally defined as a combination of trust, norms of reciprocity and networking. But in case of Bam, while trust of people to each other and norms of reciprocity have decreased, the social resilience of Bam has increased through the increase of networking which is a form of social capital.

## **9.2 Implications for Governance to Increase Social Resilience**

The case of Bam shows that despite the local people being marginalised in the design and implementation of the reconstruction, they had great power in influencing the policies and plans since they were the consumers of the services. The residents changed the centrally-designed plan based on their needs, i.e. using a combination of prefabricated units and built houses, not welcoming the exhibition of houses to choose from, applying for the cheapest design, using prefabricated units as sources of income. They had the power to legitimise, accept or deny the services the NGOs provided for them. They also had the power to either endorse the local government by regarding it as an influential organisation or to discredit it by marginalising the authorities in urban governance through disconnecting themselves from it.

In Bam, due to the weak performance of local government in urban governance, people rarely sent liaising and grievance letters to the local government but preferred to send their grievances to the Presidency Office. Central government policies have a great role in empowering local government and sharing power with local residents. However, this did not happen in Bam as central state policies marginalised local government in decision making around the reconstruction. The responsibility of local government in governing the city remained limited like its budget. Local residents were not allowed formally by the central decision-makers to participate effectively in

designing and implementing the reconstruction plan. Chances to strengthen the links between local residents and governmental organisations were not utilised, which left people feeling unsatisfied with the reconstruction. With the deterioration of livelihood opportunities and the previous family-centred social structure people felt insecure.

Most active NGOs in Bam were focused on covering the livelihood deficits and acted as charities. However, there were signs of NGO activities creating civic links and new local NGO's activities might develop the lost sense of care and responsibility among local Bamis. Much work is vitally needed to educate grassroots organisations on their role in urban governance and participation. This could be done through the following ways:

- NGOs can educate people about their civic rights and the ways they can make authorities responsible to realise their rights and answer their claims.
- NGOs can encourage the grassroots communities to mobilise especially regarding disaster mitigation and risk reduction
- NGOs are needed to create effective links with governmental organisations to legitimise civil society activities and secure access to financial support.
- Non-local NGOs need to achieve a correct understanding about the norms and values of the target community and respect their values in order to achieve legitimacy and acceptance from the target community
- There is a need to consider the context dependant nature of development projects and value the social and demographic study of the target community before applying empowering projects
- Paying attention to vertical links along with horizontal ties in empowering projects and facilitating the campaigning of community priorities to appropriate agencies
- To get sustainable achievements in empowering projects, projects need to be long-term to let the institutionalisation of participatory norms occur

- Greater technical capacity of NGOs in terms of having experience, knowledge and management skills is needed to increase the effectiveness of their efforts
- International links need to be created among international NGOs to share knowledge and resources

The central government can play a great role in encouraging grassroots and local organisations to practice transformative participation since it's the target community that benefits from its outcomes or conversely pays the cost of failure. The success of development projects increases the trust of local community towards formal and governmental institutions and encourages them to step out from their closed tribal communities and engage in social and civic projects. The success of development projects relies highly on creating essential links with the local people. This could be achieved through the following ways:

- Create spaces for local residents to share their views and local knowledge with central decision-makers
- Increase the capacity of local governmental organisations to play an influential role as mediator between local residents and the central government
- Create a legitimate and influential space for national NGOs to educate the grassroots about their rights and responsibilities and increase its financial support from NGOs
- Invest in academic and administrative research to find applicable and effective ways to decentralise urban governance
- Value local knowledge and trust local experience and ability in developmental projects
- Focus on livelihood programmes since they are the cornerstone of vulnerability reduction, and without creating a proper livelihood strategy for the target community other projects including housing would not get the satisfactory results

It was discussed, particularly in chapter seven, that applying urban and professional biased approaches not only waste the opportunity for local workers to increase their skills and local capacities, but are also ineffective in meeting the centrally defined objectives of the reconstruction and housing projects.

A lack of social and livelihood regeneration programmes in reconstruction programmes of Iran is felt. The main executive body of reconstruction in Iran is the Housing Foundation. This organisation focuses on the physical aspect of housing and follows a rigid blue-print approach which is insufficient for addressing social vulnerabilities. In such a governance setting that NGOs do not have sufficient capacity and support to address social vulnerabilities in regional scales, there need to be responsible governmental bodies to do the task. There are Social Welfare Organisation and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, but they have very pale or no role and support in reconstruction programmes.

### **9.3 Study Limitations:**

The interdisciplinary nature of this research made the researcher cover a broad range of literature and concepts. In order to study the social resilience of Bam to the researcher addressed the concepts of vulnerability, resilience, governance, social capital, reconstruction, disaster, civil society, NGOs, participation and the inter-relations of these concepts. These concepts were framed in Bam's social context and Iran's disaster management and reconstruction framework. To conduct scientific research the process required precision and cautious considerations to relate and present the ideas and set a fair scenery for the reader.

Data collection had to be impartial and representative. The hardest task was to overcome the subjectivity of the process and seeing the facts through reasonable and scientific lenses, since the researcher had strong emotional feelings about the subject. Data then had to be analysed using the best existing approaches to provide useful and

reliable findings. The whole process was a challenge for the researcher since the research has to be truthful to the academic arena and the researched community.

Key limitations of this research were:

- Limited time and budget
- Subjective ontology of the social research that may not have covered a thorough picture of social resilience of Bam
- The reliability of the findings on the gathered data – the answers of the sample communities might not be a just representative of the whole residents, or even may have changed since the interviews
- The limitation of explaining and exploring the situation through the existing literature to increase the validity of the research

## **9.4 Further Research and Recommendations:**

Further literature is needed on the role of NGOs in transferring society towards a more engaging attitude. There is considerable literature on the importance of NGOs supporting civil society development. There is a need to further research the ways NGOs can communicate with grassroots organisations and especially how they can use this link to activate civil society.

Further studies are required on how NGOs can diversify their strategies from a charity style approach towards more empowering strategies considering their largely limited budgets. Moreover, how, in the absence of livelihood supportive policies and vulnerable livelihood situations, people would welcome non-charity style approaches. The fragility of NGOs in terms of financial and technical access questions the role of NGOs as the "Third Sector" or even as an influential body in urban governance. Further research is needed to find sustainable ways to increase the financial and technical capacities of NGOs.

Two changes are recommended to occur in development studies: first, local people should not be regarded as powerless in affecting their surroundings where they are marginalised in central decision-makings. People have the greatest power in affecting their surroundings (albeit based on their needs and capabilities and not on their ideal picture of life style); non-participatory approaches only results in unsatisfactory results. Second, the attitude towards the state as an obstacle of participatory governance and decentralisation needs to change towards a powerful contributor, especially in studies of developing countries. The state, with collaboration of academics and non-governmental agencies and organisations with experience in the field, has the greatest power to foster the space for public participation. Further studies are needed to find ways that states can create such spaces.

## **9.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the essence of this thesis. It has presented the contributions this research made to the concept of urban governance, NGOs, vulnerability, resilience, social capital, reconstruction and participation. It has discussed how vulnerability in Bam was shaped and how the earthquake revealed the vulnerability of Bamis. It was discussed how NGOs, central government, Housing Foundation, and local government shaped the framework of reconstruction; and how they affected the social resilience of Bam. The necessary measures to help achieve better governance towards increasing social resilience were also presented. The chapter highlighted the limitations of the study and the areas that would benefit from further research. Some recommendations for the future were also outlined.

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# Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Hello. I am sorry to disturb you. I am Ahoura Azarian, a university student working on reconstruction in Bam. I am trying to find about your household and life in this area. Could you please help me by answering a few questions, which will be treated with complete confidence. It may take 10 to 15 minutes. I would like to talk to the head of the household.

Address:

Name

Position in household:

Gender:

Age:

## Part A: Livelihood access

1. Pre-fabricated unit                      Built House                      Undestroyed house  
Others
2. Number of rooms (except kitchen, bathroom, toilet)?
3. How many households live in here?
  - a. One
  - b. Two
  - c. Three
  - d. Four
  - e. More
4. Do the households relate to each other?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. If the answer is "Yes", what is the relation?
6. How many members does each household have?

7. The occupation of each household's members:

Occupation	Household 1		Household 2		Household 3		Household 4		Household 5	
Pupil										
Student										
Unemployed										
Housekeeper										
Office Employee	P.T <sup>1</sup>	F.T <sup>2</sup>	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T
Farmer	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T
Services	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T	P.T	F.T
Other										

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<sup>1</sup> Part-time

<sup>2</sup> Full-time



8. Incoming of each household before earthquake:

Household 1	Household 2	Household 3	Household 4	Household 5

9. Do any of the households receive help from Imam Khomeini Relief Committee or Welfare Organization?

- a. Imam Khomeini Relief Committee
- b. Welfare organization
- c. None

10. How much? How often?

11. How many household members were injured or killed in the earthquake?

#### Infrastructure

12. Are you still in the place of rubble?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. Do you have sufficient access to the following items?

	Good	Sometimes with problem	Usually with problem	No access
Clean drinking water				
Before the earthquake				
Gas				
Before the earthquake				
Swage				
Before the earthquake				
Garbage collection				
Before the earthquake				
Electricity				
Before the earthquake				
Phone				
Before the earthquake				
Personal vehicle				
Before the earthquake				
Public vehicle				
Before the earthquake				
Health Service				
Before the earthquake				
School Service				
Before the earthquake				
School				
Before the earthquake				
Cradle				
Before the earthquake				

14. Who owns the land?

15. To whom did it belong before the earthquake

16. How about the building?

## Part B: Social capital

### Membership in Groups

17. Are any of the household members a member of an association? (e.g. charitable associations, associations of mosques, parents and school teachers association, spinal injured association, guild associations such as farmers' guild, local community, UN, etc.)
- a. Yes (association name)
  - b. No

### Social networks

18. How many close friends have you these days?
- a. No one
  - b. 1 or 2
  - c. 3 to 5
  - d. More than 5
19. If an emergency came up that you need money, except for first-rate family, how many people are there that you can ask them to for borrow money and they are willing to help you?
- a. No one
  - b. 1 or 2
  - c. 3 to 5
  - d. More than 5

20. Of those few cases, in your opinion, how many of them have the financial ability to help you?

21. Do you think that the neighbourhood people will help each other in difficult circumstances?

- a. Yes
- b. No

22. Has this issue changed compared to before the earthquake? (If you have come to this place after the earthquake, is it different compared to the previous neighborhood?)

23. How have your weekend leisure time changed compared to before the earthquake?

#### Trust and integrity

24. Do you know your neighbours?

- a. Yes
- b. No

25. Do you think that most of the neighbourhood people can be trusted?

- a. Most of them can be trusted
- b. One should be careful of evil people
- c. Most of them will help you if you need
- d. Most of them are distrusted to each other

26. Why do you think like that? Did you think like this before?

27. How your trustfulness has changed to the following people compared to the time before the earthquake?

	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Non-native residents					
Before the earthquake					
Neighbors					
Before the earthquake					
Bami citizens					
Before the earthquake					

#### Cooperation and group activities

28. Have you done any group activity with your neighbours in last four years? For example, something like removing rubbles without previous coordination, or enrolling the kids in school, giving or taking charitable foods.

- a. Yes
- b. No

29. How such cooperation has changed compared to the first days of the earthquake?

30. How about before the earthquake?

31. Have you done anything in the past four years in corporation with others in Bam to benefit the whole city?

- a. Yes
- b. No

32. If the answer is "Yes", what was it?

33. If the answer is "Yes", was it voluntarily or was it asked?

- a. Was voluntarily
- b. It was asked

#### Social interactions

31. How many times did you have guests in the past two months? How has it changed compared to before the earthquake?

32. How many times have you gone to a party in the past two months? How has it changed compared to before the earthquake?

#### Sense of empowerment and participation

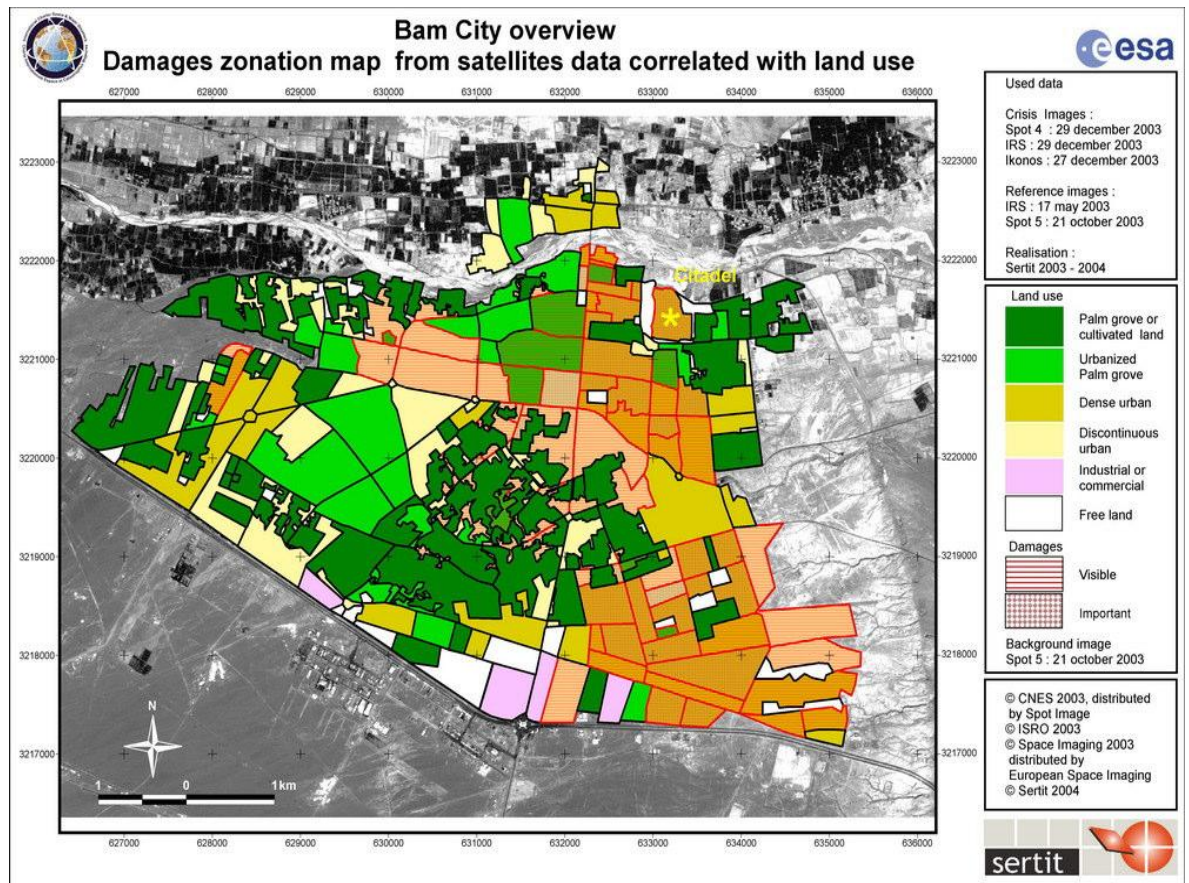
33. How much do you think that you have a role in improving Bam?

- a. Very
- b. Slightly
- c. Nothing

34. Which of the following things have you done in the past four years?

	After the earthquake		Before the earthquake	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participating in local seminar or association				
Calling, writing letters to, meeting with the mayor, governor, member of City Council				
Vote for City Council				
Vote for president				

## Appendix 2: Land Use of Bam Map 2004



## Appendix 3:

Themes and Questions asked from Thirty Seven Bamis regarding the housing reconstruction and its effects on their sense of belonging

1. Characteristics of the respondent and his/her family:
2. How many people injured in the earthquake in this family?
3. How long later after the earthquake you started the reconstruction?
4. How long did the reconstruction of your house last?
5. Problems of reconstruction of your house:
6. What resources you got helped from? NGOs, neighbour, ...
7. How much of the reconstruction was done by yourself and how much by others?
8. Were contractors Bami? Or workers?
9. How the reconstruction did make you closer to formal/governmental organizations?
10. Did any agency (person) help you or support you in the process of reconstruction?
11. Did your land or house changed in form or size after the reconstruction?
12. Your opinion about the effect of reconstruction on palm-groves:
13. The government's policies' effect on reconstruction: positives and negatives:
14. What was the most influential institution in reconstruction in your mind?
15. What were the disadvantages of the reconstruction?
16. Describe the post-reconstruction Bam:



## Appendix 4: Photos

Photo1. The Housing Project of the House of Mother and Child NGO



Photo 2. Neighbours sharing food in the House of Mother and Child housing project



Photo 3. Runners of House of Mother and Child NGO have monthly meetings with residents to hear their problems



Photo 4. Children and women have a safe space to play and gather in the housing Project of the House of Mother and Child NGO





Photo 5. Example of an NGO in prefabricated shelter creating nursery for children



Photo 6. Example of burning palms to change the use of the land from a palm grove to commercial



Photo 7. Example of cutting palm to build new houses



Photo 8. Unfurnished streets of Bam 2008, five years after the earthquake





Photo 9. Blocks of Houses and palms destroyed in the earthquake (Photo source: ISNA)



Photo 10. A typical new built house in Bam



Photo 11. Example of life in a prefabricated unit

